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The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

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THE DARK SIDE
The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

IN MEMORIAM

Just as we were about to go to press with this issue, news came in that Zombie Flesh Eaters man Lucio Fulci had died on March 13th at his home in Italy. Dark Side favourite Lucio was due to have begun filming Mystery Of The Wax Museum shortly in collaboration with Dario Argento who appeared on Italian television to pay tribute to Fulci, 68 year old Lucio passed away peacefully in his sleep. A full obituary will appear in a future issue of this magazine...

Introduction

I didn't get a chance to tell you this last time round, but as from our March issue we increased our American distribution by about a thousand percent to encompass an even higher figure than our UK distribution, which means that (hopefully) you'll have a far greater number of regular Stateside readers from now on. We'd also like to encourage US subscriptions through the North American sales agency listed in the back of the magazine, and thanks to the wonders of modern technology all you computer buffs round the world can now check us out on the Internet and via E. Mail. Address details can be found on the contents page, and we look forward to hearing from you!

One of the most difficult things about putting together a mag like this every month – apart from deciding what's to go in it – is thinking of something new and hopefully interesting to say in my introductions! Sometimes I think that it might be wiser to scrub round the intro altogether and cut straight to the chase, but I have that I always enjoy reading the editorial comments on other mags and so I endeavour to persevere, whether you like it or not. So let me see, what shall I ramble about this time round? How about I tell you something of my early film collecting habits. Interested? Stuff it, I'll tell you anyway!

Having been a film fan since an imagination-stimulating encounter with THE TIME MACHINE at the age of ten, I started off collecting film books, posters and stills and graduated to owning complete movies after I managed to save up enough money to buy myself a super 8mm sound projector. At the time, which I guess was the mid-70s, you could buy full length feature films in black and white for about £25. They came on four reels and although the picture quality was blurry and the sound often muffled I went confirm that I gave in hell like a Hollywood mogul when I invited my pals round for a private showing of LONG NIGHT OF DEATH (my first purchase) on my bedroom wall.

It was impossible to buy full length 8mm versions of the latest blockbusters, (though some were available in single reels showing ten minutes of highlights). Not that didn't worry me at all because I was more interested in the obscurities that were available, like SOMETHING CREEPING IN THE DARK, a great Italian haunted house shocker, WHERE HAS POOH GONE?, a supernatural thriller starring Warren Mitchell, and SUNDAY IN THE COUNTRY, a violent Canadian thriller about three psychos who terrorise the inhabitants of a remote farmhouse – this had a really gross scene where someone was blown apart with a shotgun and lashing of gore. I managed to get hold of an 8mm trailer reel from Blackhire Films in America which showed the gruesome highlights of BLOOD FEAST, 2 000 MANIACS and THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE. Later on when I started giving film shows at art colleges to fund my film-buying "habit," this caused a number of faint-hearted souls to walk out. My prize acquisition – and biggest box office draw – was a full length copy of THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, which cost me £100 back when £100 was worth that amount!

At around this time I contributed an article to the late, lamented HOUSE OF HAMMER magazine on the subject of collecting 8mm movies. To my surprise they accepted it. This in turn led to an amazing and memorable experience, which I must tell you about. I had managed to persuade my then-girlfriend Lindy my sister Gillian and her boyfriend Garry (who's a real sci-fi nut) to go along with me to a horror/fantasy convention at London's Bloomsbury hotel. All the guests were given name tags regardless of their celebrity status, and as I was poking round some of the dealer tables I was suddenly accosted by this kid at about twelve who asked me for my autograph.

"But I'm not anyone famous," I laughed, somewhat reservedly, at which point he asked if I was the same Allan Bryce who had written an article for HOUSE OF HAMMER, and if so, could I sign his copy of the mag? I was dead chuffed to do this, my head swelling visibly I'm sure. But the unnoying thing is that Lindy, Gill and Garry had gone off to the bar and absolutely refused to believe me when I told them what had happened. "If it's true, he must have been on day release from an asylum," said Lindy. Oh well, as Mick Jagger said at the end of Ned Kelly, such is life.

My 8mm collecting days ended with the arrival of video in the late 70s. The writing was on the wall when I got a phone call one Sunday morning from the aforementioned Garry, who asked if I'd like to come round to his place and watch GET CARTER. "But, at mes'n that an telly last night?" I asked. "That's right," he said smugly. "I taped it!" Sure enough the swine had splashed out on a Sony Betamax machine and after seeing the quality of the recording I knew that video was a must for me too. Having no money of the time was a bit of a problem, but I finally hit upon a heart-rending solution. I found a shop that sold VCRs and did part-exchange on 8mm equipment, and swapped my projector and entire collection for a VHS video recorder – I'd have had a Betamax, but the shop didn't stock them. It was the end of an era for me and the beginning of a new dawn of prosperity too, when I started writing for just about all of the movie-related magazines that flourished in the wake of the video revolution. I've come a long way since then, but one thing hasn't changed. That's STILL the only time anyone has ever asked me for my autograph!

ALLAN BRYCE

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DJANGO
Sein Gesangbuch war der Colt

THE WEIRD WEST!

Lucia Fulci, Dario Argento and Antonia Margheriti all made spaghetti westerns with a macabre twist. Oater expert John Pritchard hits the terror trail to uncover a fistful of frighteners that will appeal to DARK SIDE readers!!

One of the greatest of fantasy films has all the ingredients you'd expect of a hero of superhuman skill, accompanied by a cunning thief, in search of a fabled gold hoard. They quest takes them through a wasteland, full of treacherous and colourful characters, and ends in ritual combat with a fiendish villain at the heart of a vast necropolis. The film is, of course *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*.

Westerns have always been the stuff that myths are made of, but some of the Italians who got their hands on the genre in the 60s and 70s brought a new and darker magic to the mix. The best of their westerns took the external trappings of the American genre and crossed them with elements much closer to home, from Medieval morality plays to Mafia vendettas.

They created a fantasy universe of their own – one with pistols and prayer books, stalked of swords and sorcery – and quietly revealed a taste for the grotesque and the macabre. Any halfway decent spaghetti western is instantly recognisable by its morbid symbolism, bizarre religious imagery and mythic scenes of violence. The most interesting ones dig deeper for the essence of the myth. They capture the imagination, grip and hand it – pushing the same buttons as a horror movie does.

In the book *Cult Movies: Once Upon a Time in the West* is interpreted as a story of myth (all heroes from the dawn of time (the ancient race") angels or demons, perhaps finally dying out as the modern world moves in. This image was picked up on by gothic rock band Fields of the Nephilim (the heroes of old in Biblical myth) whose *Dawnrazor* album featured numerous Sergio Leone samplings and Ennio Morricone quotes.

A DEVIL – FROM HELL!

The supernatural connotation is entirely appropriate for the more mythic and fantastical spaghettis. The image of the "demon gunslinger" is used to semi literal effect in many westerns. The hero of *The Big Silence* is as fast as the Devil ("I'm all I know", says the sheriff, "he is the Devil"). The phantom avenger in *Django the Bastard* describes himself with rehearsal "a Devil – from Hell!". And the villain of *Sartana* shot by an apparently empty gun, expires on the line "I was right: you are the".

Sergio Corbucci's *Django* (1966), described by Kim Newman as "the first of the great gothic westerns", has a stunning credit sequence – one of the starkest and most haunting in the history of the genre. We watch a figure dragging a mud-spattered coffin off across the landscape, striding relentlessly through the rain until he disappears over the hill and the camera pulls back to show an empty windswept valley. (According to Franco Nero, who starred in the film, they told him to keep going until he was over the hill – then all cleared off and left him. "They do things like that to you in Italy," he says.)

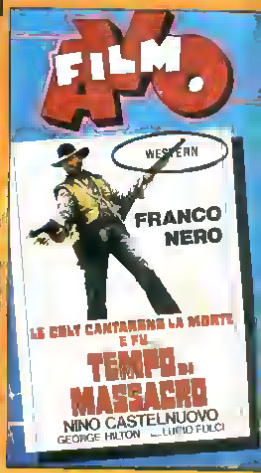
Django is a Civil War veteran, scruffy and minister, who has returned to avenge

the murder of his wife. He takes on the sadistic Major Jackson and his gang of red hooded Confederate renegades who are into ethnic cleansing (of Mexicans) in a big way. There's deathly symbolism at every turn: in the ominous coffin (which turns out to contain a machine gun), the desolate ghost-town setting, and the cemetery where the climactic duel takes place.

After an excellent first half full of murky atmosphere, the pilot goes through a slacker phase, before picking up again for the savage, final showdown (a bit like Macbeth, really). Eyes are shot out, ears are cut off, bodies pile up in the Sonoran-like main street, and Django, his hands crushed to a pulp, has to fight the final duel with his fingers dropping off. And he wins.

The film was originally banned in Britain for its violence (there being nothing new under the sun) but was hugely successful elsewhere, leading to an avalanche of ripoff sequels. With Django's coffin lost in the quicksand, and his ruined hands miraculously healed, he turns into just another gunslinger and few of these are of interest. Even the nine off-cial sequel Nello Rosati's *Django Strikes*

> "Any halfway decent spaghetti western is instantly recognisable by its morbid symbolism, bizarre religious imagery and mythic scenes of violence..."



Again (1987) is a mere shadow of the orig and film. Franco Nero doesn't even wear a hat in it. I mean, come on.

SADISTS AND MADMEN

Django Kill (1967) isn't really a Django film at all, it underwent a cash in title change from the original *If You're Alive Shoot*! It's a unique piece of work in any case and, even in its censored version, one of the most disturbing horror films I've seen for years. Here the familiar western setting becomes the backdrop to a nightmare. From the very first sequence, where two men scrambling the countryside at night find the hero clawing his way out of a mass grave, it's clear we're out in the badlands without a map.

Directed in hallucinatory style by Giulio Questi with an eye for gory detail, the film follows the Stranger (Tomas Milian) to an evil ridden town full of sadists and madmen who murder his unsuspecting gang with their bare hands. The hunt is on for some hidden robbery treasure with the townspeople pitted against an equally vicious gang of macho gay gunslingers. When they hear the gold is hidden in the cemetery, the latter try and find it by the simple method of digging up all the graves!

The Stranger, meanwhile, holes up with the treacherous storekeeper, has it off with the mistress in the attic, gets tortured by vampire hats, escapes in time for the show down, and finally rides away as the town burns down. The loot, which had been hidden in the roof of the storekeeper's house, melts all over the owner's face, transforming it to a glowing golden skull.

The film contains a classic dirty joke sequence, almost invariably cut from most versions. The Stranger's gun fires golden bullets, and one of his wounded victims is brought to the town doctor. The doc digs away, discovers a bullet, and hacks up the hapless patient while looking for more! The violence of the full Italian print is legendary, but the cut-down version loses the power of the English version, thanks to Questi's terrific direction, the vivid photography and an excellent performance from Milian.

PRAY FOR YOUR DEATH!

The only spaghetti western hero to rival Django in terms both of sequels and cult status was Sartana, the mysterious Angel of Death. *Sartana aka If You Meet Sartana Pray For Your Death* (1968) is one of the most enjoyable fantasy/horror westerns, with a lesson that transcends its crude shoot em-up plot. Directed by Gianfranco Parolini (better known in the UK for films like *Sabata* and *The Bounty Hunters*), it creates a genuinely eerie, almost supernatural hero, who – like a curse personified – brings death to anyone who touches the cache of stolen gold.

Like Clint Eastwood in the later *High Plains Drifter*, he emerges out of nowhere in a haze of dust and heat, the solitary rider shadowing a doomed stagecoach ("I feel as if a ghost were following me," a nervous passenger complains).

Sartana is a gambler and magician cloaked in black, a self-styled "pall bearer" who makes his fun in a decrepit funeral parlour. Yet portrayed by Gianni Garko, an extremely handsome and charming Italian actor, he somehow comes across as both sinister and engaging.

As usual, the plot – which is too complicated to explain, let alone follow – involves robbery and double cross, with the stolen gold concealed in a coffin. Baby faced mass killer Lucky thinks he's got it all sewn up, but Sartana's on his trail like a guilty conscience. Even a bullet in the forehead fails to stop him: he rises from the dead to quite spine-tingling effect, for a final showdown in the funeral parlour. At the end of the film (with the body count in triple figures) he drives off into the dawn with a hearse full of gold. Who did you say you were? asks the undertaker's sweetheart. A first class pall-bearer, says Sartana, with a smile to make your hairs stand up on end.

The character was partly inspired by a comic strip creation called *Mandrake the Magician* with elements of the Lee Van Cleef 'Man in Black' (*For a Few Dollars More*) grafted on. Garko compares him to a vampire who can appear and disappear in darkness as if transformed into a bat. He is also widening the resonances – the refu-

Guns and graveyards – chief ingredients of any Django *movie*

'Okay, so whose round is it anyway?'

'But I fire six shots, or only five...'

'Mine's bigger than yours, pardner!'

Django *negotiates a cheap rate for buying coffins in bulk* ▶

> "From the very first sequence, where two men searching the countryside at night find the hero clawing his way out of a mass grave, it's clear we're out in the badlands without a map..."

carnated villain of an earlier film, Alberto Cardone's *Blood at Sunsown* (1967). Garko's success in that role, as the evil 'Sartana' had already in Parolini's film, with him as hero.

Again, none of the numerous sequels is in the same class. Giuliano Carmineo's *I Am Sartana, Your Angel of Death* aka *I Am Sartana – I'll Dig Your Grave* (1969) is lively and inventive, but the tone has too much of a James Bond jokiness. In this and subsequent films the hero's sinister persona is tamed and invested.

There are some nicely atmospheric moments nonetheless. Sartana still lurks in gloom and graveyards, and raises the shadowy final duel to an almost mystical plane ("We're chips on the board Deguello ... not the one who spins the wheel"). Plus, he comes back from the dead again.

The villains have no chance.

CLINT'S OLD WAISTCOATI

Several key figures in the Italian horror movie industry honed their talents in the spaghetti western field.

Dario Argento never directed one, but contributed notable screenplays to *The Five Man Army* and *Today It's Me ... Tomorrow You*, plus work on the original story line of *Once Upon A Time In The West*. Other practitioners made a grisier mark. Lucio Fulci's *Massacre Time* aka *Colt Concert* (1966) though in many ways a conventional spaghetti western, has numerous flashes of a horror director in the making. Despite the brutality and body-count these hints come at sobrier more unsettling moments – such as the way the camera discovers faces watching in the shadows; a real sense of menace over shadows many scenes.

There's some effective reverse symbolism, as well. While the hero (Franco Nero again) wears a gothic black cloak, and consorts with a coffin-maker (the demented villain Ivano Cantalmuovo) appears immaculately in white. On a more visceral level there are shootouts whippings, crucifixions, and hapless peasants being hunted down (and torn apart) by wild dogs – plus a great title song from Sergio Endrigo. So, something for everyone. Nero is once more the mythic stranger (complete with Clint's old waistcoat), while Cantalmuovo is genuinely scary a languid smiling psychopath, hiding our agitry and sadism behind a civilized veneer.

Fulci returned to the genre in the 70s, with two more films, *Silver Saddle* (1978) which – despite hankings of gore – is completely routine and *The Four of the Apocalypse* (1975), a much more interesting western. It is a strange, rambling, mystical tale of four 'pilgrims' in search of their destiny, who cross the path of Chaos, a demonic nomad (played by Tomas Milian).

The action never quite lives up to the bloody opening massacre (where the grotesquely hooded gunmen recall Jack and a gang in *Lucignol*) and the final showdown is disappointingly straightforward but Fulci's dreamlike/nightmarish style makes this worthy of inclusion in the annals of the Weird West.

GHOSTLY RETRIBUTION

Enzo Girolami's Keoma aka *The Violent Breed* (1976) has some similarities to Fulci's film, including the 'killer nomad' aspect of the hero, and the presence of a doomed pregnant girl (symbolic of life brought forth from death).

There is also a lot more action. This is probably the best of the 70s spaghettis, with a darkly gothic atmosphere and a genuine sense of myth – plus loads of spectacular gunplay.

Franco Nero plays a wandering half breed gunfighter who comes to the rescue of a town overrun by anarchy, racism and (just to put the tin lid on it) plague.

The film suffers from the director's conviction that, if he puts all the violence in slow-motion, he will be mistaken for Sam Peckinpah and is further hampered by a wince-making sung commentary on the action ('An almost Brechtian effect," said the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, charitably), but it's all enjoyably surreal.

There's also, as in many spaghettis, a welcome sympathy for

the victims of prejudice and oppression.

Antonio Margheriti, whose long credits include a gothic tale of ghostly retribution *The Long Hair Of Death* (1964), tried the same approach with westerns and came up with *And God Said to Cain* aka *Fury at Sundown* (1969). Klaus Kinski, usually a psychotic villain, is actually the hero of this one which adds considerably to the impact.

Released from prison at the start of the film he swears vengeance on Acombar the man who framed him and sends word ahead that he will come for his dues at sundown. Suitably unnerved, Acombar summons his bodyguard of gunslingers – but as night falls and a howling storm blows up his enemy infiltrates the town and starts wiping them out.

The storyline is compressed and intensely dramatic, full of gothic touches like the shadow church with its sombrely tolling bell (one of Kinski's victims is found hanging from the bell rope!), and the ancient Indian catacombs beneath the town. The camera pays close attention to Kinski's ravaged face and chilling stare. He is utterly pitiless, his soul destroyed by years in prison – existing only to fulfil his vendetta. Acombar's men become increasingly convinced that he's a ghost or a demon from hell.

The film is further strengthened by its human sided villains. Acombar is now a respectable man – making plans for the future of his innocent son – until the crimes of his past come back to haunt him. Hence the Biblical resonance of the title.

the-barrel budget. There's the odd effective moment. Django makes his intentions clear by planting a cross in front of each opponent, complete with date of death! – but the wooden acting (and absurd camera angles) kill these fleeting sparks of inspiration just as dead.

A final fantastical entry from Guillermo Carnideo, in the form of *His Name Was Holy Ghost* (1970) a wonderfully manic, end-to-that, several viewings later is still full-out incoherent fun.

Gianni Garko plays the supernatural gunslinger Holy Ghost, a sort of reverse Sartana, cloaked in white and accompanied by a schizophrenic dove called Eagle ("I know – but she's convinced that she is.")

Thanks to his ability to appear and vanish at will (plus an outrageous sawn-off automatic Winchester), the villains haven't got a prayer. No horror here despite the heaps of bodies – but the humour is compounded by the way a ghostly hero breaks the rules.

It's all a part of the western myth and as Sergio Leone once said the myth is everything.

Which brings us to the end of the trail – at least for now. Many of these films are at last being re-released on video (look out for the *AkimArthouse* label) and some rarities now turn up on late-night TV.

But the best way to catch up with them is to do what I did – put an ad in *The Dark Side* Classifieds.

A lot of people out there know the Weird West already.

I hope this little feature will give some others their first taste. ☐

> "Even a bullet in the forehead fails to stop Sartana; he 'rises from the dead' to quite spine-tingling effect, for a final showdown in the funeral parlour..."

The final showdown is brilliantly done – a duel in a burning room full of mirrors, with dozens of wild eyed Kinskis closing in for their revenge.

THE MYTH IS EVERYTHING

Sergio Corbucci's *Django the Bastard* (also 1969) both films are suspiciously similar in plot and style) is rather less effective. At the outset, Django is a member of the Confederate army (which suggests the scriptwriters haven't paid much attention to the original film) and killed when his unit is betrayed and massacred. Fifteen years later his cadaverous ghost returns to take revenge on the traitors.

Also for this time premise the film itself is a textbook crap spaghetti western with the sort of script, direction, performances and music you'd expect with a bottom-of

> "Django makes his intentions clear by planting a cross in front of each opponent, complete with date of death!"

John Pritchard's horror novels *Night Sisters* and *Angels Of Mourning* are now available, and his new book, *Black Widows* is due to be published this autumn.

FANZINE FOCUS

Steve Green gets into some serious plugging of new zines, including yet more free publicity for that Martin bloke...

BLACK TEARS

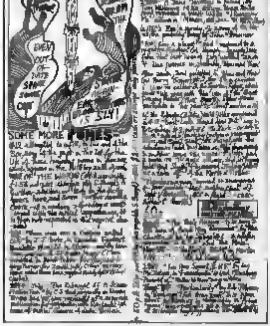
Look, apologies for opening this month's column on a downbeat note but pole position really has to go to the regrettable news that Adam Bradley has been forced to call time on his blossoming publishing empire, which took root a couple of years back with the fiction fanzine BLACK TEARS and recently spurred off into its sister title VIOLENT SPECTRES. As Bradley explains in his tenth TEARS, it isn't his personal enthusiasm which has queered the pitch but the damnable logistics of running a regular magazine (something Allan and I can both sympathise with) - worsening cash-flow, a smoking photocopier and a frazzled computer have unfortunately proven the collective final straw.

Still, he manages to go out in style - fiction from Chris Kenworthy (founder of the most worthy Barrington Books imprint), Caroline Dunford, Tim Barton, D Ceder, Phoenix Hitch and Darren Callaghan plus artwork by Dallas Goffin, Liam Kemp (regrettably one of his less striking pieces), Chris Webb and Lawrence Kenny (a real find) not forgetting the hefty reviews supplement (THUNDER ROAD, PAINT IT BLACK, RIPPER). Let's hope this doesn't mark a permanent departure from our ranks. (Available for £1.75 from 28 Treaty Street, Islington, London N1 0SY.)

What makes Bradley's problems all the more irritating is that, so far as I'm aware, BLACK TEARS followed all the safeguards - maintaining a sensible quarterly schedule, eschewing fancy printing technology and allowing its circulation to expand naturally yet it was still caught by the minutiae of actually getting into print. Let that be a lesson to us all, especially those of us lucky enough to offer their advice to other proto publishers.

ITALIAN AD-MAT APOCALYPSE

John Martin's GALLO PAGES has long been essential reading for anyone with more than a casual interest in Italian thrillers and I'm pleased to announce that a new issue is already in the pipeline. For the meantime, however, we have ITALIAN AD-MAT APOCALYPSE, a selection of newspaper advertisements for such perverse delights as Argento's TENEBRAE, Bava's BLACK SUNDAY ('The undead demons of Hell terrorise the world in an orgy of dark horror!'), Antonioni's BLOW UP and the scuzzy Carroll Baker vehicle PARANOIA ('Love is the tool that strips a jet-set widow bare of her morals and her millions!') Sad to say such hysterical hyperbole is becoming increasingly rare since the vertical integration of studios and cinema chains has pretty much forced low budget/foreign productions off the big screen circuit and into the realms of straight-to-video releases. Martin's nostalgic scrapbook is a welcome wander down giallo's Memory Lane, even if the lasting effect is to leave one yearning for the era of the flesptit. (Available for £2.50 from Post Office Box 134, West PDO, Nottingham NG7 7BW.)


Data Dump Thirteen ISSN 1364-2049

SOME MORE ZINES

DATA DUMP

Steve Sneyd's partwork survey of fantasy and science fiction poetry has reached its thirteenth four page edition, though the fourteenth should take the story well into the 1990s and largely complete the saga. This time out, he considers the use of poets as central protagonists in such works as Samuel Delany's DHALGREN and Ray Nelson's BLAKE'S PROGRESS, recent collections (including Sneyd's own RIVERS THAT HURT) a vein of vampiric verse) and use of poetry within fiction (with particular reference to the late Roger Zelazny). I just wish his dodgy data on STAR TREK poetry hadn't forced me to come out of the closet and reveal myself as a Trekkie trivia buff - the shame of it. (Available for 70p from 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 8PB.)

SAMHAIN

Fresh from helping out at Gainesville's Gallery of Horror (useful experience for running his own Halloween House of Horror sideshow in Exeter this coming autumn) John Gilldige opens his fifty fourth SAMHAIN with the first installment of an interview with Hong Kong director Tsui Hark whose cinema debut with the superb fantasy THE BUTTERFLY MURDERS promised much for the genre but was echoed thematically only in ZU WARRIORS FROM THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN before has move into production. British director Anthony Waller's thriller MUTE WITNESS (his calling card for directing the forthcoming AN AMERICAN WERE-WOLF IN PARIS), Kathryn (NEAR DARK) Bigelow's controversial millennial eybershocker STRANGE DAYS and Emir Kusturica's surreal Palme D'Or winner UNDERGROUND were amongst the fare at November's London Film Festival reported upon here by Ian Calcutt and one of four

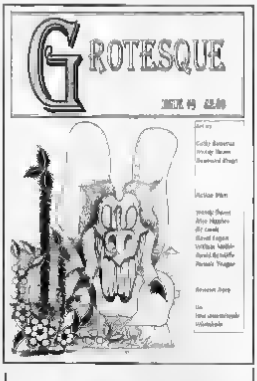
events covered this issue the others range from Eurotest 95 (dedicated to the movies of Aristide Massaccesi better known to sleaze fans as Joe D Amato) through the thriller oriented Nottingham's International Mystery and Thriller Festival (with another screening for MUTE WITNESS) and Swansea's Welcome to My Nightmare (part of the city's Year of Literature festivities) (Available for £2 00 from 77 Exeter Road Topsham Exeter Devon EX3 0LX)

SACCADE

Robert Gillard Karl Hallowell open their sixth SACCADE in a curiously sour tone complaining about a recent review in ZENE it's a pity no one suggested they deny such items the oxygen of publicity since this little rant merely serves to highlight a comment most of us would otherwise have missed or swiftly forgotten As for the issue itself there's fiction from Barry McCann Darren Callaghan John Savage and R J Clarke an article on actor Brad Dourif (whose excellent performance in GRIM PRAIRIE TALES coincidentally graced my TV just a few hours ago), poetry by A Lee Firth the first part of a guide by C D Pollard to early weird fiction (who d've thought LITTLE WOMEN's Louisa May Alcott launched her career writing pulp blood and thunder" stories?) and a less than favourable review of the Point Horror Imprint (They certainly aren't books you can't put down more like ones you can't muster up the enthusiasm to pick up) In view of the vast number of writers eager to see their work in print (to the extent of sending their stories to any magazine around even those who never use fiction) the proliferation here of Savage's material seems oddly out of balance whilst the varying typeface reinforces my own suspicion that (like Firth's poetry and Pollard's directory) it was simply cut and pasted into position more variety in contributions (and much less in layout) is recommended (Available for £1 75 from 212 Stannington View Road, Crookes Sheffield, S10 1ST)

GROTESQUE

Another stalwart of the small press fiction scene is David Logan's GROTESQUE, the ninth edition of which features stories by Rhys Hughes Des Lewis Pamela Younger Wendy Down Gavin Williams David Hutchinson William Meikle and Logan himself It's an impressive line up but I can't help wishing a little more effort had been put into choosing the art which accompanies a couple of the stories (Down does few favours either to Hughes or to herself) and into footnoting the 'mean bitch grumble' editorial and its general rant against the



hassles of editing ("I hate disappointing writers yet daily I do ahhh) To his credit though Logan appears to have built up a loyal band of regulars (Hughes alone is usually worth the price of admission) and a proactive readership both heartwarming omens for GROTESQUE's continuing success (Available for £2 80 from 39 Brook Avenue (off Barn Road) Carrickfergus County Antrim Northern Ireland, BT38 7TE)

WORMING THE HARPY, AND OTHER BITTER PILLS

Enthusiasts for Rhys Hughes elegant prose incidentally would be well advised to check out WORMING THE HARPY AND OTHER BITTER PILLS a handsome short story showcase from Tartarus Press entries include 'One Man's Meat' (among the most popular tales in GROTESQUE #8) Cat O Nine Tales' (the initial fable intriguingly opened with the identical metaphor — "a mouth full of stones" – to that which closes the book in 'Grinding the Goblin) and the charmingly titled The Man Who Mistook His Wife's Hat for the Mad Hatter's Wife' Hughes also features in TALES FROM TARTARUS edited by Ray Russell and Rosalie Parker alongside contributions from the likes of Ramsey Campbell Simon Clark and Andy Darlington both hardbacks are warmly commended to fans of the weird witty and wondrous (Available for £14 95 each from 5 Birch Terrace Hangingbirch Lane Horam East Sussex TN21 0PA)

TAHTIVAELTAJA

Finland's sf/fantasy quarterly TAHTIVAELTAJA bids farewell to 1995 with yet another splendid issue slipped between two cracking cover illustrations by Sami Saramäki (who also provides a rather tasty cybersex sketch inside) As well as translated fiction from British writers Storm Constantine and Simon Ings (both guests at last year's Finncon) the Helsinki Science Fiction Club offers profiles of Americans Samuel R Delany and Norman Spinrad (the latter still the only sf author to have sex scenes from one of his novels read out in the House of Commons) an overview of Gwyneth Jones Aleutian sequence introduces their readers to the joys of BABYLON 5 runs through a selection of the best known Hong Kong actioners and twangs the g string of the immortal ORGY OF THE DEAD (tag A masterpiece of erotic horror!") Visually striking superior in presentation okay so it's almost entirely in Finnish but you can't have everything. (Available for £5 00 – cash only – from Tom Jermaa Innaihjankuja 1 B 29 00520 Finland)

NIGHT DREAMS

Kirk S King's also aiming at a quarterly schedule for NIGHT DREAMS the third edition of which features cover art by Black Lodge regular Darrel J Bevan. Simon Clark leads up the writing credits joined by Paul Searskey, PEEPING TOM's Stuart Hughes, William Meikle, Alan Casey (who illustrates his own spoof article on unicorn cuisine), Martin Fiskins and Peter Tennant before Clark returns to close the issue.

One curious aspect this time out is the proliferation of snapshot fiction in the order of 500/750 words occasionally effective (usually when the shock twist would be undermined by giving the reader enough time to second guess the author's intent) the frequency of its use on this occasion does seem a trifle excessive.

(Available for £2.50 from 47 Stephens Road, Warmley, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B76 2TS.)

...NEWS UPDATE...

Trevor Barley's Media Productions has a new address and telephone number for orders and enquiries: Freepost, LON6370, London, N16 7BR (0171-275-8600). Ditto CRITICAL WAVE, which is now accepting subscriptions (£11.86 per annum) at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX.

... ...

The Black Lodge, Birmingham's informal hang-out for horror and dark fantasy fans, has relocated to the Australian Bar, Hurst Street (near the Birmingham Hippodrome), meetings still take place in the downstairs bar on the first Tuesday of each month. However, the planned conversion of the upstairs meeting room into a restaurant looks set to evict the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, Britain's longest-running gathering of sf and fantasy enthusiasts; [illegible] 0121-643-1999.

FANZINE FOCUS

Material for review should be forwarded to: Fanzine Focus, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull B92 7LQ.
Editors are reminded to ensure they advise the British price for a single issue (including postage) and warned that reviews can appear up to two months after receipt.

Please note that dummies or mock-ups of proposed publications are not acceptable for review purposes.

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POST MORTEM

If you have something you want to get off your chest, don't be afraid to scream at us about it. Send your bouquets or brickbats to Post Mortem, The Dark Side, Stray Cat Publishing, P.O. Box 146, Plymouth PL1 1AX

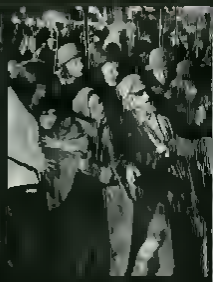
Dear Allan,
Being a media magazine so you now are, you won't need any boot-licking from me to get you to answer a few questions, especially after being caressed by the tender hands of Charmaine Sinclair and company on Television X, you lucky.
OK then. Ever since wiping the smiles off the faces of the local Obscene Publications squad in court a few years ago (which is another story), I have been amused by the censorship in this country. So after reading an advert in Dark Side *advertising a German Film Festival in London some time back, I was wondering if it was possible to see films in this country in their full uncut glory or are they censored to a degree even at festivals? I know this freedom would not extend to porno films, but wouldn't the film* Schrauma *also incur the wrath of James Farman and be considered obscene?*
Nigel Wingrove must be given credit by the video industry for taking his action against the BBFC recently. He certainly has my respect. And finally, is there any chance of doing any articles in the near future on the so-called underground filmmakers like Jörg Buttgereit, Richard Kern, Nick Zedd etc?

Allan Copley,
Bradford, West Yorks.

The folk who organise film festivals usually try to get away with showing the uncut versions of movies and most of the time there's no problem because the authorities don't know about it until it's too late. Even porno movies have been shown at UK film festivals! We've covered Jörg Buttgereit twice already in *The Dark Side*, and maybe we'll get around to the others you mentioned in time. Oh and by the way, Charmaine hasn't canvassed me yet, but I live in hope.

"I told you it would be a swinging party!"

Dear Allan,
I think it's great that you've gone monthly again, even better in full colour. Anyway, on to my point. Once again the media have proved how biased and ignorant they are when it comes to controversial videos. I recently purchased the video, **Executions** *– not because I'm a sicko, but because the corporal punishment issue interests me. After being severely quizzed about my ID in the shop, I sat down to watch this tape*



"String me up if you like, but

Contrary to what the papers say, this is a very educational video which does not glorify death and violence. I think that it was given a raw deal by the media.
While I agree that under-18s shouldn't be allowed to buy this, it certainly isn't detrimental in its effect. Ray Butterely said that only perverts will watch it. Well, he watched it, so does that make him a pervert?
Phew! That said, I have been reading The Dark Side *since issue 1, and haven't missed a single edition.*
How about a special on Cannibal Holocaust, Cannibal Apocalypse and Cannibal Ferox? Cheers for letting me get that off my chest!

Emily Fripp,
Kelhourn, Herts.

We've carried features on Cannibal movies in the past, but a full issue on the subject might be too much to stomach. What do you think, readers?

Dear Dark Side,
I have some questions I'd like you to clear up.
1. I have an Elephant Video copy of City Of The Living Dead. *On the back of the sleeve it says that its running time is 94 minutes but it only runs for about 87 minutes. Which is right?*
2 I also have a video entitled The Hanging Women, *made in 1974, in which country was it filmed and what's its original running time? It's on the Turbo Phase label and stars Stanley Cooper and Vicki Nesbit.*
3. I've got a video entitled Horror Farm *(running time 85 minutes). In which year was it made?*

"I'm not going to EuroDisney!"

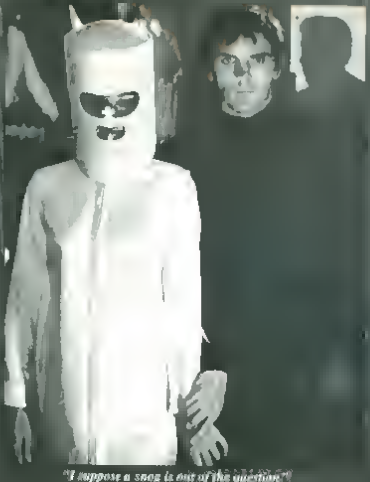
4. Can you tell me about a film called Cathy's Curse *(on the Apex label)? I'd like running time, year it was made etc.*
It's nice to see companies like Redemption and A Taste Of Fear *are releasing old horror films. As an avid collector I'd like to see more of this.*

Paul Knowles,
St Keverne, Cornwall

The official full running time of *City Of The Living Dead* is 92 minutes – the Elephant release has been horrendously cut. *The Hanging Women* is *Beyond The Living Dead*, a Paul Naschy vehicle filmed in Spain in 1972. It runs for 89 minutes. *Horror Farm* runs 86 minutes. *Cathy's Curse* was made in 1976 and runs 88 minutes – it has been listed in our horror guide.

Dear Alan,
It has been a long time since I last wrote to you, and much has happened in the interim period. Donald Pleasence and Peter Cushing have passed away, I've relocated several times, Fear collapsed, and your magazine has gone from strength to strength.
Congratulations on hanging on in there, even though the social climate has been rather anti-horror in recent years.
Some of the things which I wrote in my previous letter to your magazine (issue 3, I think) were probably unnecessary, although in a small way some of the comments I made concerning some of your contributors appear to have been mildly prophetic. What are John Brosnan and David Cox doing nowadays anyway?
Before I continue in a questioning manner, may I say that I am enjoying reading your film listing each issue, and only regret that I in not able to see half of the titles as these sorts of films are rarely shown on TV and I don't possess (spiritually or physically) a video player. The Fandine Years section is also excellent, and the book review section is good (but too short).
The other slight gripes are that you seem to have neglected Dark Side-*oriented authors somewhat. You have very few interviews with them. Also, although it wasn't good as a regular section,* Times Of Gory *had its interesting points. So why not bring it back, say, once every six months, and review bands and musicians who have specialised in the twilight areas of life, like Hawkwind, Dio, Alice Cooper, Black Sabbath, and mention those who have done related concept albums such as Dream, Jeff Wayne, Alan Parsons Project, Floy, and Rick Wakeman?*
Back now to the questions.
1. Are you aware of a soundtrack having been made available for Michael Mann's The Keep? *I'm pretty sure it was Tangerine Dream who did it.*
2. Was there ever a partially animated film, possibly called The Red Car, *about a boy and his dog being drawn into a twilight world where his dog becomes a watchdog (with a big clock in his side). I'm wondering if I dreamt it?*
3. Are you aware if either Dave Bryan (Black Sunday) or Spencer Hickman (Nothing Shocking) are still organising film festivals? Or are the Midnight Media folk alone in this worthy endeavour these days?
4. Lastly, whatever happened to John Gilbert, editor of Fear *magazine, and why, when he contributed articles to your magazine was he never mentioned in the credits?*
I would be grateful if you could answer at least some of the queries I have put to you, and I wish you lots of luck with the future of The Dark Side *and your other, less salubrious endeavours!*

Justin Richards,
Reading, Berkshire.



"I suppose a snog is out of the question."

John Brosnan gave up writing our book review column because he was too busy elsewhere. He's still churning out books, and he recently wrote the screenplay for the new British sci-fi horror movie, *Previous Times Of Gory* proved to be a dead loss, so if we do go into heavy metal coverage at any time in the future it will be in a completely different fashion. A soundtrack was issued of Tangerine Dream's score for *The Keep*, but it has now been deleted. I've never heard of *The Red Car* – can any readers help on that one? As far as I know, the only Midnight Media is Trevor Harley and Paul Brown who are staging regular horror festivals these days. I have no idea what John Gilbert is up to these days, but you seem to be a bit confused here. John never contributed to *Dark Side*, but I contributed to *Fear* in the early days, using a pen name (either Matthew Hopkins or Mark Lewis, I can't remember now) because I was doing a very unusual job for the Newsfield's *Movie* magazine at the time and John didn't want the publishers to know he was doing me as well!

Dear Dark Side,
I was reading a recent issue of your magazine when I came across a letter by a Mr Buck Ridgeridge. To say his letter struck a chord would be an understatement! I live in the town centre near to the local college and every day I see young boys with para boots, green army surplus coats, greasy long hair and useful bootlegged band t-shirts that are dire in the extreme. All these people seem to look the same, but over the years I have noticed a definite trend. They all look the same for the first 12 months, but then as they start to ascertain their own identity they ▶

"I always used to think that size didn't matter..."

tion to realise that going around like a herd of media sheep is not only sad but also incredibly boring.

They all buy The Dark Side to look at the classified ads and spend £75 or so on a couple of terrible quality pirate videos (pirate-users usually go for one of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre films, A Clockwork Orange, The Exorcist films, Cannibal films or Lucio Fulci films).Now that the ads are more controlled (by W.H. Smith), searching for pirate videos is pretty much a no-go, so instead they look up films in the Dark Side A-Z of Horror *because their mums and dads don't know they're into films and therefore haven't thought to buy them a decent guide for their birthdays. Kids eh? Can't live with 'em, can't do a mag without 'em.*

PS Keep up the good work on the only page I read – the ink on cuts.

Mary Ridgerider,
Burnley, Lancashire.

If I could understand this letter I might be vaguely annoyed by it. I wish that Dark and all his inbred cousins would take a lifetime subscription to Horror and leave us alone! See the new letter for the extension of agony to this column.

Dear Alan,
Thanks for printing my letter in issue 46. I hope to become a regular contributor to your magazine! Who does Dark Ridgerider think he is? His letter in DS 49 was an insult to us all. I enjoy reading the Post Mortem section and have yet to read any correspondence from horror fans of lower intelligence. Just because some of us like to discuss video nasties or apply for pen-friends doesn't make us "brain-washed pubescents" or "pea-headed losers." After all, we pay our money and we get our say.

Perhaps the Redemption issue was a little unnecessary. But Nigel Wingrove and co deserve commendation for their efforts to cater for the weird and wonderful crowd. No other video distributor would release the obscure nasties that Redemption specialises in.

As for the A-Z film guide, this section may be slow going but it is an interesting read. Forget Hallowell and his followers, any sensible horror/sci-fi addict would be best advised to check out Chas Balun, John McCarty, James O'Neill and John Stanley for written movie material. If Mr Ridgerider (or should that be, "My name is Dark and I'm going to piss!") is disappointed with The Dark Side, he can always crawl into a dark corner and read those boring FEAR book issues over and over again.

On a lighter note, the Cultist Cuts section is excellent. Please keep this column coming. Do you have any plans to interview big George Eastman or Bruno Mattei in the near future? Also, how about devoting certain issues to various video labels of yesteryear including specials on VIPCO, Video Replay, Go, Vampix and Intervision? I was sorry to hear of Scapegoat's demise. The launch issue was essential reading and I was looking forward to the second issue. Scapegoat was a positive step in the fight against censorship and deserved to be a bigger success. Thanks for listening, and keep up the good and gory work.

John Bell,
West Division, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne.

The video labels idea is a good one, we'll look into it. We've already done a feature on Bruno Mattei (see issue 53) and George Eastman was the subject of a Dark Side Interview way back in an issue where nitrate Pee issue (apologies – sorry, but you'll just have to get there and read it!)

Dear Alan,
I totally sympathise with your recent correspondent L. Jones from Somerset. I am fascinated with gore, yet I have no intention of poking someone's eyeballs out. All my friends think it's sick and that I need help (what, with poking someone's eyeballs out? Eh), and for a while there I was beginning to think that I was the only one in this situation. A while back I saw Natural Born Killers, and in the film I noticed slips of chainsaw killings being shown in the background. They're not from The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, *but I do remember, when I was about ten, seeing a video cover for a film that was just called* Chainsaw Massacre. *Is it possible that the clips were from that film or do you have any ideas which film they are from and where I could get it (or pictures of it)?*

Natasha,
County Derry.

The chainsaw clips are from the Al Pacino remake of *Scarface*. As far as I know there isn't any movie that's just entitled *Chainsaw Massacre*.

Dear Dark Side,
Congratulations on a right riveting read. I was managed to find the August issue in Malta while I was on holiday there. Next, may I give a well-deserved "V" sign to the BBFC for trying to deny us our rights to what we enjoy. But enough of the moaning, let's get on to some questions.

1 In your A-Z Horror Guide I notice that you haven't included a film called Dark Power. *Even though it's very low budget with crap acting, I thought it was great. It all revolves around Tibet Indian Zombies who have awakened and wreak havoc*

"I do so enjoy my

"Jumpin' of lump-frog, Tiger!"

among a group of teenagers. It has some quite gory moments and is also quite funny. Is this film so bad that you didn't bother with it? Or is it known as something else?

2. I am a great fan of horror novels and get my books off reading James Herbert, Clive Barker, and especially Richard Laymon and Shaun Hutson. Could you tell me if any of the latter have, or will be putting their books on screen (I only know of Herbert's Sleeps) and if Shaun has any forthcoming novels planned.

3. Have you ever thought of asking famous authors to consider writing short stories for The Dark Side? The horror metal mag, Kerrang do this at Christmas with Halloween and it has been really successful. Could be interesting?

4. Do you know if Quentin is directing the sequel to Reservoir Dogs?

5. Do you have any news on

"This is the last time I go on a camping holiday with Yun Helong!"

Friday Part III, Halloween 4 or Predator 3?

PS: Stephen King is boring and should hang up his typewriter. Somebody should please, please bring Shaun Hutson's Assassins to the big screen!

Rob Masters,
Malvern,

No film could be so bad as not to be worthy of inclusion in our guide. Regrettably I missed it. When the guide is updated there will be a full issue of addendums, so if you are film hung on mail about 2004... I haven't any info on upcoming books or films from Shaun Hutson and Stephen King, sorry. Neither can I tell you whether Tarantino is directing a sequel to Dogs. You know my feelings on action in Dark Side – I think action belongs in books, not magazines. Finally, no news on Friday 10 and Predator 3, but Deliverance is apparently ready for release. My guess is it's straight-to-video time again!

Dear Allan,

Another year passes and we horror fans slip even further down the popularity tables to somewhere between traffic wardens and Terry Christian. The censorship thing has really gone too far. If the BBFC insist on violent horror films from our poor, sensitive eyes, they may as well pull the entire Clint Eastwood and Charles Bronson back catalogue off the shelves as well. The way things are going we will only have kids' cartoons to watch. I can only assume that when this happens our comical government will drag Hannah Barbera and the Disney Corporation before the courts to answer for all the crimes in our society.

Another result of the bad publicity that gore films seem to be getting lately is that private video dealers aren't replying to potential customers. I appreciate the risks involved in selling pirate films, but hardly any of the dealers I've written to lately have bothered to reply. If any of you are reading this, please write. Honestly, I don't have a tin-shaped head or "I love David Alan" tattooed on my arse, so go in touch. I'm fed up with donating to people's dump collections; if you don't want to trade, don't advertise! Oh, and while we are on the subject I thought that your readers should know that E. Smith of Birmingham is a rip-off merchant. Avoid him like the plague. He's now due a visit from the boys with the bats – and I don't mean Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee!

Anyway, on a lighter note I'm still very pleased with the quality of the mag, keep it up! It's nice to see the back of VIPCO again. If I can't watch the entire film, I don't want to see a cut-to-shreds rip-off. VIPCO just provided another opportunity for dodgy dealers to sell cut films as originals to unwary customers. Perhaps I'm being cynical, but you know what they say "once bitten..."

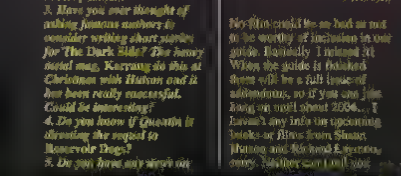
Anyway, that's my lot. Air expelled for another year, and by the way, where's the Abel Ferrara article I asked for back in 1994? I'll give you until January 1996 and then I'm coming round with my Black and Decker.

Steve Cuthbert,
Highbridge, Somerset.

So come on, Steve, what do you really think of the censors? E. Smith of Birmingham probably wishes I'd ransacked your letter, actually. I guess I've missed your deadline on the Ferrara piece, so by all means pop round with your drill – I've got a few shelves that need putting up while you're here.

Dear Allan,

I'm just writing to say that recently my brother Nick and I had the pleasure of meeting the very lovely Caroline Munro at a comic fair in London. In the past we have met several celebrities, but none have been so warm and charming as Ms Munro. After waiting in a long queue, our turn came around and we were enchanted with the ▶



"As last it can be revealed: Monica Vitti wears a wig!"

lady. We asked her one question. Did Christopher Plummer wander around the set of Starcrash *morning, "What the hell am I doing here?" To which Ms Munro answered yes. Fabulous!*

After signing a photograph and a cherished copy of Starcrash *we posed for a photograph with her and said our goodbyes. I left London a happy man that day, the long, boring journey having proved very much worthwhile. I just wanted to share with* Dark Side *readers my encounter with a wonderfully entertaining lady from the world of horror.*

Kevin Wilson,
Isle Of Sheppey, Kent

Caroline came to our *Dark Side* launch party, and I fully concur with your glowing description of her. She still looks great, and I can't understand why she hasn't been seen on our movie screens for some time now.

Dear Allan,
Why do people keep writing in only to rubbish a particular horror film? If you don't like films like Burial Ground, Texas Chainsaw Massacre *or any Fulci movie then don't buy them. Maybe a big-budget, hyped-up mainstream stack of shit will suit your taste. I saw Richard Littlejohn's show on cable recently, and was sickened at a certain female's paranoid views on films – Natural Born Killers being the given example. To tell you the truth, I couldn't care less about films like that. I'm a fairly strict horror buff always have been, with a taste for Fulci and Argento. Anyway, it seems that the BBFC are moving on to bigger things. The BBFC consists of sad, senile, dead ignorant cardboard cutouts who cannot accept that we live in a naturally violent society and wish instead to blame this on something that can't answer back. If mainstream is now a target, what chances have* Cannibal Holocaust, TCM *and* The Exorcist *got of ever being released again? Why do the BBFC consist of psychologists, schoolteachers, and paranoid lesbian women who seem to have all the answers before viewing? Their power of spite will not be taken from them. They like to see horror as their enemy. What a boring, strict upbringing they must have had! The largest killer in the world is religion, and it comes from unrealistic paranoid people like the BBFC, who are out of touch with reality. But what can be done?*

A Fulci Fan,
No Address Supplied.

Blow up the BBFC? (Only joking – honest!)

Dear Allan,
I have just seen a film which changed my views on horror movies. I sat and watched this film all the way through, and when it was finished I wasn't sure how I felt. Apart from Dawn Of The Dead *it is my favourite. It's called* Cannibal Holocaust, *and is a pounding, gory, realistic film which made me ill and shudder, not only with fear, but also with fascination. Have you ever done an interview with Ruggero Deodato? If not, do one.*

I was pleasantly surprised at the very high quality of acting by everyone, so an interview with one of the stars would be great too. Anyway, changing the subject, in your Horror Guide *you said that Tobe Hooper's* Death Trap *was made in 1962 and that it was a sequel to* The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. *But that was made twelve years later. You also said that* Death Trap *was known as* Eaten Alive. *I have a film called* Eaten Alive, *but it's about cannibals. Speaking of cannibals, have you ever done a cannibal special?*
By the way, here are my top ten horror films.
1. Dawn Of The Dead.
2. Cannibal Holocaust.
3. Deranged.
4. Death Trap.
5. I Spit On Your Grave.
6. The Texas Chainsaw Massacre.
7. The Evil Dead.
8. Demons 2
9. The Devils.
10. Nightbreed.
On to my last point. How could you possibly give Cannibal Ferox *and* Apocalypse *a full four stars and only give* Holocaust 3?
Keep up the splendid work on the magazine. Long live Ruggero Deodato, John Martin, Robert Kerman and all of The Dark Side.

Mark Bell,
Jarrow, Tyne And Wear.

Death Trap was made in 1976, and as I said in the guide, it was released in America as *Eaten Alive*, which happens to be the UK title of an Umberto Lenzi cannibal movie. Basically, I prefer *Apocalypse* and *Ferox* to *Holocaust!*

Look for a Ruggero Deodato interview in a future issue.

"I'm too old for necking!"

COMPETITION WINNERS ISSUE 53

DARIO ARGENTO'S WORLD OF HORROR
D. Mclean, Edinburgh; Debbie Dearon, Holmwood; Richard Bowden, Newcastle; T. Lonnax, Cirencester; G. Browning, Lancashire; Tony Hilton, Cranbourne; Carla Dassoy, Tooting; A. Lewin, Jersey; L. Heath, Kingston; G. Jenkins, Westcott

THX-1138
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LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF
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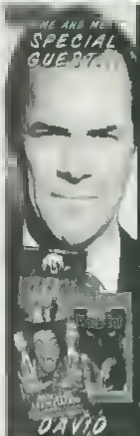

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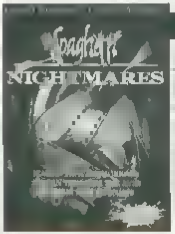

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THE DARK SIDE

Hello again guys and ghouls, and welcome to the creepy competition crypt, where we take a leaf out of Dracula's book and go batty over some ghastly goodies. We sent our old pal the Werewolf round a few of our favourite haunts (and video companies) with his begging bowl, and the result was a howling success. They gave him the following prizes, just to make him go away and have a shave. Okay, fiends, get your pens out and start scratching those funny lines ..

First of all, Hammer fans will be pleased to know that Tel-to Vision are continuing to issue high quality video transfers of some vintage Hammer favourites that haven't been around for some time on sell through. This month you can get your bloodstained mitts on Peter Cushing's final two portrayals of Baron Victor Frankenstein in *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* and *Frankenstein And The Monster From Hell* which first saw the light of a projector bulb in 1969 and 1973. Both directed by Terence Fisher, the films are the last gasp of classic Hammer, particularly *Must Be Destroyed* which is a splendid movie and possibly even the best of the series. The tape of this one also features an exciting original trailer as well as one of the ickiest looking video covers we've seen – where the hell did they get that bug-eyed image of poor Peter? Anyway, we have five of each to give away so get your entries in now!

Secondly, *Exquisite Tenderness* doesn't, on the surface, sound like the kind of movie to grab *Dark Side* readers by the short and curlies. But this gory hospital thriller is actually full of the kind of medical mayhem that we never seem to get enough of on the NHS. We're talking syringes through eyeballs and heads being lopped off, plus open heart surgery where the patient has a 100 percent chance of not recovering – well, it's tough to resume normal life when someone has removed most of your internal organs. We know you're dying to see this one – and so we've bagged ten copies from Fox Guild Video – and you don't even have to make an appointment!

We know that when we run the name "Bruno Mattei" past you, most sensible people will turn the page with a gentle shudder. But there's always the maniac fringe of sub-normal film buffs who would happily nail their grandmother's head to a coffee table for the chance of owning a rare movie by bloodthirsty Bruno, the Italian sleazy maestro who gave us such compelling trash as *Women's Camp 119* and *Violence In A Women's Prison*. Well, those little devils at Redemption have dredged up another of Bruno's barmy efforts, namely *The Other Hell* and have insisted that we give ten copies away in our comp. Fine lads, but what are you going to do with the other 20,000 copies in your warehouse?

All you have to do to be in with a good chance of winning one of our fabulously fiendish prizes is send a postcard to our editorial address below with a corny caption for the hair-raising picture on the right.

COMPETITION

EBONY, Trevithick House, Moorswater,
Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 4LH

The Dark Side Horror Guide

FLESH-EATING MOTHERS (1988)

*

There's nothing as tedious as a gore comedy that doesn't work and this one is very definitely dead on arrival.

A typical suburban eighbo wh ood of jolly Avo a lady types s turned into a slaughterhouse by the arrival on the scene of a strange virus (supposedly a new strain of VD!) that transforms all the mums into flesh chomping ghouls.

If you find your s pecial effects and ridiculous dialogue amusing then you may find the film strangely bearable but our advice is to forget it and check out the superior *Rabid Grandmy* instead.

Starring Robert Lee Oliver Donatella Bright Valaria Hubbard

Directed by James Aviles Martin. Panorama Entertainment 90 minutes. Colour

FLIGHT TO MARS (1951)

**

Most people think that Monogram Pictures hit the deck in the 1940s but the legendary schlock studio actually limped on into the next decade to produce this sad rip-off of the successful *Destination Moon* (1950)

In fact this was one of the first hard hard science movies Monogram made, but it is otherwise in the same old budget basement rubbish about a group of scientists who crash land on the red planet and are held prisoner by the unfriendly locals

The Martians plan to copy the US spacecraft and build their own invasion fleet but a lovesick Martian girl helps the human astronauts overcome their captors and all ends happily (and pathetically)

A sequel entitled *Voyage To Venus* was announced but never made

Starring Cameron Mitchell Marguerite Chapman Arthur Franz Virginia Huston.

Directed by Lesley Selander Monogram 71 minutes. Colour

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC (1987)

*

A bland filming of the controversial V C Andrews bestseller about a bunch of cute troppers locked in the attic of their grandfather s old mansion by their loony mum Victoria Tennant, who has to hide the fact that she has kids if she wants to collect her sizeable inheritance

The incestuous elements of the storyline are glossed over in favour of a dull TV movie approach and in fact the end result is so uninteresting that the makers had to go back and tack on a frankly ridiculous shock ending in which the evil Tennant gets her just desserts.

Feeble stuff from the director of *Blood Beach*

Also starring Louise Fletcher Kristy Swanson, Jeb Stuart Adams

Directed by Jeffrey Bloom. New World 93 minutes. Colour.

FLY, THE (1958)

****

This famous slice of late 50s sci-fi has a plot that doesn't hold water for a moo mint If you start to think about it But the premise is so intriguing and the results so entertaining that it really doesn't matter

Al Hedison (who later changed his name to David and starred in the TV series *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*) stars as a scientist combining atomic with matter transmitting apparatus before he fly accidentally mixes himself in. The atoms get mixed up with those of a fly and he emerges as a big guy with a fly head and arm and a small fly with a man s head etc!

The tale unfolds in flashback after the big fly has been squashed on a steam press, and among its more memorable moments are the scene where the hapless wife (Patricia Owens) first gets a glimpse of the monster we see her screaming face magnified many times over through the multi faceted eyes of the fly

But of all s the giant spider web scene at the end, which is both funny and frightening.

Vincent Price is in it but is a sympathetic role. Had he made this film in the 50s he would undoubtedly have played the mad scientist

Based on a *Playboy* short story by George Langelaan it was followed by two immediate sequels *Return Of The Fly* and *Curse Of The Fly* as well as two modern-day remakes

Directed by Kurt Neumann Fox 94 minutes. Colour Cinemascope.

FLY, THE (1986)

***

Cronenberg s gruesome updating of the classic 50s sci fi movie scores points for casting as mature bug-eyed Jeff Goldblum as the oddball young scientist experimenting with matter transmission Goldblum is great and so is Geena Davis as the gal who falls in love with him they later claim that that relationship is real life The film itself is not as much fun as the original, though and has a nasty downbeat feel ironically because the film performances make us care about the fate of the main characters

The Oscar winning special effects (by Chris Walas) are extremely grisly and effective showing Goldblum falling apart in front of our eyes as his metamorphoses into a fly monster. Probably the most shocking moment occurs during an arm wrestling contest in a bar I dare you not to flinch at the bone snapping conclusion!

The director appears as a gynaecologist a horrid nightmare birth sequence

Apparently Cronenberg didn t even like the original movie! Also starring John Getz Joy Boushel

Directed by David Cronenberg. Fox. 97 minutes. Colour.

FLY II, THE (1989)

**

A fairly routine sequel to the Cronenberg horror hit this time featuring Eric Stoltz as the genetically superior offspring of Geena Davis and Jeff Goldblum

The child has inherited Goldblum s rapid-development gene and ages to his twenties in five years Shortly afterwards his fly DNA kicks in and transforms him into a monster which enables him to get his own back on the sneaky scientists (and by many too Richardson) who have been using him as a laboratory guinea pig for routine stuff distinguished by special effects that are even more yucky than those employed in the first movie

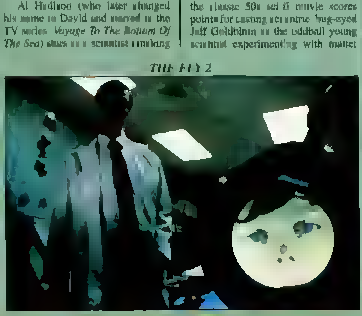
The happy ending is quite bad cream, but interestingly echoes the climax of the original *Fly* sequel *Return Of The Fly*, made 30 years earlier

The director won an Oscar for creating the FX in the Cronenberg *Fly*

Also starring Daphne Zuniga John Getz Harley Cross

Directed by Chris Walas. Fox 104 minutes. Colour

THE FLY 2



FLYING SAUCER, THE (1950)

*

A Inebin semi sci fi melodrama from the Commie-bashing days of the early 50s.

Smooth talking special agent Mikal Conrad heads to Alaska in search of a UFO which sadly for the audience turns out to be a phony dreamed up by these sneaky Soviets. This was the first movie to use the term, "Flying Saucer," but it has little to offer in the way of entertainment apart from some strap photography of the bleak Alaskan landscapes.

On a trivia note, this movie was partly financed by bingo winnings!

Also starring Pat Garrison, Hantz Van Teuffen

Directed and written (with Howard Irving Young) by Mikel Conrad
Colonial
61 minutes.
B/w

FLYING SAUCER, THE (1964)

*

An abysmal Italian comedy about a group of netcasers who all think they've seen a flying saucer.

Alberto Sordi (who was known at the time as the Italian Peter Sellers) plays a number of different roles in this dire effort directed by a guy whose real talent lay in the field of high gloss erotica, as later films like *Bin Key, Caligola,* and *Salon Kitty* would prove.

Also starring Monica Vitti, Silvana Mangano

Directed by Tinto Brass.
Dino De Laurentiis.
93 minutes.
Colour

FLYING SERPENT, THE (1946)

**

Quetzalcoatl, the ancient Aztec plumed god, is employed by archaeologist madman George Zucco who wants to protect a hidden treasure he's discovered.

When Zucco plucks a feather an immortal back the victim is mauled to death by the crazed bird, which wants its plumage back!

If the plot sounds familiar, that's because you heard it first in the Italo Lugosi movie *The Bat of Rio* (1940) which, coincidentally, was also made by no-budget specialists, PRC.

This movie isn't as good for as many laughs as the Lugosi version, but the monster, which is mounted on plainly visible wires — will still provoke a few shudders.

Also starring Ralph Lewis, Hope Kramer, Eddie Acuff

Directed by Sherman Scott (Sam Newfield)
Producers Releasing Corp
59 minutes.
B/w

FOES (1977)

*

A truly terrible sci fi film made to cash in on the late 70s interest in flying saucers that found its ultimate expression in Spielberg's *Close Encounters*.

MacDonald Carey plays a UFO expert who spends the entire film trying to trace the fibber-type flying saucer. Eventually the saucer lands on a remote island inhabited by Jane Wiley, Alan Blanchard and Gregory Clemens. The director plays the alien's first "victim" and what a shame that the film didn't finish at this point.

Directed and written by John Cosis

Conte-Alexander-Conte.
90 minutes.
Colour

FOG, THE (1980)

**

John Carpenter followed up his *Halloween* success with this well-intentioned but disappointing ghost story set in a picturesque coastal community which is enveloped in a thick fog.

Inside the fog are the spirits of shipwrecked sailors out for revenge on the ancestors of the townspeople who caused their death.

The campfire opening is good and eerie as are the scenes of machines coming to life of their own accord. But once the story gets going and the plot emerges it becomes apparent that the ghosts are only seeking a limited number of victims.

The action slows down in the middle to accommodate this plot twist and though some scenes carry a fair amount of suspense it never achieves the scary level it should. In fact it was so light on gore that the director had to go back and re-shoot some additional stocks, including a final scene clear that should never have been included.

Adrienne Barbeau (at the time she was Mrs. Carpenter) stars as a disc jockey who is chased around a lighthouse by worm-faced corpses and Jamie Lee Curtis appears as a tougher-than-usual damsel in distress alongside her real life mom, *Psycho* heroine Janet Leigh.

Carpenter who also wrote the spooky music appears in one scene as a church caretaker.

Also starring Hal Holbrook

Directed and written (with Debra Hill) by John Carpenter
Avco Embassy
91 minutes.
Colour. Panavision.

FOG ISLAND (1945)

**

An atmospheric crime story with a few nasty bite touches, this reason-able little yarn tells of a ex-con who invites a bunch of people to spend a weekend on a foggy island.

It transpires that one of his guests is the person who once framed him into the slammer – though why the guilty party accepted his invitation is perhaps the film's biggest mystery. Okay as a late night time waster for those who enjoy old dark house type spookers the film betrays its low budget origins by mainly being set in one room!

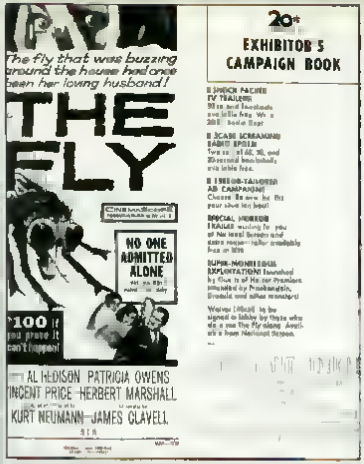
The great cast includes George Zucco, Lionel Atwill, Veda Ann Borg.

Directed by Terry Morse
Producers Releasing Corporation
70 minutes
B/w

FOLDS OF THE FLESH (1970)

**

Former Hollywood star Pier Angeli committed suicide (supposedly over a doomed love affair) shortly after starring in this dire flick made shorter about a motley and disgusting amateur team that raise havoc among the male community. It makes a change to see the guys getting the wrong end of the knife but in every other way this is yawningly banal exploitation fodder, complete with leering cape scenes and the kind of plotline that is totally impossible to



daylight so the vamps just gives up.

Clumsily acted and directed, with poor gore effects.

Also starring Hannom Rosvi Drago Alfredo Mayo Fernando Sancho

Directed by Sergio Bergonzelli
Cinematografica International
90 minutes.

FOLKS AT THE RED WOLF INN (See TERROR HOUSE)

FOOD OF THE GODS (1976)

**

That sound you hear is H.G. Wells revolving very quickly in his grave at the way the infamous Mr B.I.G. has treated his famed novel – for the second time. (Gordon also made a terrible 1966 version called *Village Of The Giants*)

An ambrosia-like substance is discovered on a remote island which is by giant chickens, wasps and rats. Island dwellers Ida Lupino and John McLiam have to put up with monster worms in the waste disposal just because greedy entrepreneur Ralph Meeker wants to market the strange food. Marjoe Gortner plays a football star who comes to the island with his mate Jim Cypher and Pamela (*The Honeymoon Killers*) Frankl is supplies the weak I've interest.

The back-projected effects are feeble and so is the story so in fact this makes some of Gordon's 1950 abominations (like *Attack Of The Puppet People*) look pretty good by comparison.

Also starring Belinda Balaski

Directed and written by Bert I. Gordon
American International
88 minutes.
Colour

FOOD OF THE GODS PART 2 (1988)

*

"I've seen a lot of rats in my time, some big, some very small. But that was the Loch Ness Monster of rats!" So says a character in this misbegotten movie that has little in common with the Bert I. Gordon movie that preceded it, only it's just about as bad. (In fact Gordon was originally scheduled to direct but walked out over a disagreement with the producers.)

Experiments with a radical growth hormone at a New York university create a pack of huge killer ants which eventually attack a town of synchronised swimmers.

Most of the effects are particularly shoddy and this straight-to-video stinker is one of those films that fade from your memory even while you're watching them.

Starring Paul Coufos Lisa Schrage Michael Copeman.

Directed by Damian Lee.
Carolco
88 minutes.
Colour

FOOL KILLER, THE (1965)

***

An unusual movie set just after the American Civil War and starring Anthony Perkins as a psychotic type who's surprisingly who falls in with a 12 year-old orphan (Edward Albert).

As their journey progresses Albert comes to the assumption that Perkins may be "the fool killer" an axe wielding maniac who sees it as his mission to rid the world of fools.

The film is slow-moving but genuinely fascinating to watch thanks to a combination of strong performances (Perkins is great, and Albert does extremely well considering this is his acting debut) and evocative direction.

Blackly atmospheric at times painfully intimate at others this obscure sleeper is surely ripe for rediscovery.

Alex Phillips Jr was responsible for the startling monochrome photography. Based on a novel by Helen Hinkle Aka *Violent Journey*.

Starring Henry Hull, Dana Elcar Salome Jens

Directed by Servando Gonzalez Landau
100 minutes
B/w

FOOLS (1970)

*

Any 70s film that contains a song named "A Poem I Wrote For You Baby" has got to rate high on the fingers-down the throat scale and this one will certainly be of value to diabetics everywhere.

Jason Robards stars as a middle aged horror star who has had enough of Hollywood. He runs away to San Francisco and gets flowers in his hair etc. There he falls in love with Kathie or Rosie the runaway wife of uptight lawyer Scott Hylands and the two have an affair. It all ends in tears, with the more weak minded of viewers sobbing uncontrollably to the treacherously hip sounds of Kenny Rogers And The First Edition.

You have been warned.

Also starring Jack Nance and Mako

Directed by Tom Gries.
Transtar/Cinerama.
93 minutes
Colour

FOOTSTEPS IN THE FOG (1955)

***

An atmospheric mystery with massive overtones set in London at the turn of the century.

Stewart Granger stars as a villain who climb who murders his wife, but

THE FOUR SKULLS OF JONATHAN DRAKE

is discovered by friend Joan Simmons, who secretly loves him.

She blackmails her way into the household but then becomes a prime target for murder. The distastefully Grunger follows her in the fog and strangles her but he gets the wrong person by mistake. Simmons realises what has happened but she still fancies the lad enough to give him an [illegible] and the plot progresses to an even stronger fashion to a down-beat twist climax.

Slow moving in places, the film's chief asset is its lush Technicolor cinematography by Christopher Challis based on a novel called *The Interruption*, by W.W. Jacobs, author of *The Monkey's Paw*.

Also starring Bill Travers, Finlay Currie, William Hartnell.

Directed by Arthur Lubin
Film Locations/Columbia
90 minutes.
Colour.

FORBIDDEN PLANET (1956)

★★★★

Now has cast film with which transposes the plot of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Man-4 a planet on the far side of the galaxy where the sky is green, the sand pink and two moons circle above.

It's 2200 AD and commander Leslie Nielsen and his men arrive in Altair-4 to be met by the brilliant Dr Morbius (Walter Pidgeon) a member of the missing Earth colony sent to the planet 20 years earlier. Morbius introduces them to his beautiful daughter (Anne Francis) and to Robby The Robot a unique and astounding creation which speaks 88 languages and has seemingly unlimited quantities of bourbon (much to the delights of bonus loving crew member Earl Holliman).

Morbius explains that a mysterious force wiped out the former occupants of the planet — a genius race called The Krell. And the dreaded "Monster From The Id" arrives back with a vengeance it wreaks havoc on the newly arrived astronauts.

A 10 000 foot technicolor painting was used as the planet's backdrop and

Disney animator Josh Meador created the id monster.

Excellently done for its time the special effects still stand up today but I'm still not sure about that nerve-grating electronic score. I'm pretty certain the film would have been better with conventional orchestral accompaniment. Must be seen in widescreen for full effect.

Also starring Warren Stevens, Jack Kelly, Richard Anderson.

Directed by Fred McLeod Wilcox
98 minutes. MGM
Cinemascope
Colour

FORBIDDEN WORLD (1982)

★★

Roger Corman's low budget version of *Alien* is actually one of his better films at little-by-exploitation film making.

Fantasy island's dwarf star Herve Villechaize plays the ruler of the Sixth Dimension who organises a gross assortment of monsters, vermin and mutants on whom they perform deviant sexual acts amid state-of-the-art sets.

Parts of the film are the only enjoyable audience for this off-the-wall effort which includes Susan Cyrell, Mark Venturi, Jillian and Andy Warhol acolyte Viva.

Directed by Richard Elfman
Borak
76 minutes
Colour

FORCED ENTRY (1975)

★

A cheap and very nasty slasher movie filmed on pretty locations around Staten Island and New Jersey.

The title gives a clue to the nature of the violence depicted the killer (Ron Max) is a stuttering grease monkey who cut off a bird and so children rape and murder them instead.

Nancy Allen and Tanya Roberts make their screen debuts as potential victims. It is somewhat slow moving film which is padded out endlessly with shots of people driving around in cars.

The rape scenes are particularly unpleasant: the killer uses a bottle and are played out in slow-motion to maximise the agony. Also *The Last Victim*.

Directed by Jim Solos.
Century International Productions.
82 minutes.
Colour

FOREVER EVIL (1987)

★★

Rod McCall (plays the sick nervous of a chainsaw attack on a motel cabin who teams up with Tracey Huffman the survivor of another demon rampage and cop Christopher Trotter to hunt down the monster responsible. You know the sort of thing: because we never even get to see the main creature.

Instead the muddled script throws up a zombie servant, a devil dog and a self-aborting demon baby. The makers were obviously out to imitate *The Evil Dead* with a touch of H.P. Lovecraft thrown in for good measure and although it endeavourously applies in places sadly their ambitions outreached their abilities.

The acting is physical the pace is that of a snail and the script is strictly by routine.

Starring Howard Jacobsen, Kent Johnson, Diane Johnson.

Directed by Roger Evans.
B&S Productions.
117 minutes
Colour

FORBIDDEN PLANET

FOREST, THE (1983)

★★

More straight-to-video junk with a strong cannibal on the loose chopping into a cast of non-entities. Most of the action is set in the forest at night which would be [illegible]

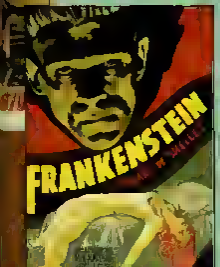
and I saw who the hell was acting on.

And it is. An awful scores rich in the entertainment value makes and very little higher in the gore department.

Also *Terror In The Forest*. Starring Dean Russell Michael Brody, Blaine Warner John Rain.

Directed by Don Jones.
Wide World Of Entertainment.
85 minutes.
Colour

FOREST OF FEAR (See: THE BLOODEATERS)



FORGOTTEN ONE, THE (1989)

***

A good well paced ghost story featuring the excellent Terry O'Quinn (*The Stepfather*) as an author suffering from writer's block who rents an old mansion located by the gorgeous ghost of a woman (Elizabeth Brooks) who was murdered in the 19th century by her jealous hubby.

The sexy spook sees him as the reincarnation of her lost love which is actually very bad news for O'Quinn as he is devoted to the surprisingly downbeat climax.

Kristy McNichol is also very fine in this sexy and sometimes quite scary film done in a glossy old fashioned style. Well worth tracking down.

Directed by Phillip Badger
Wind River Productions.
97 minutes.
Colour.

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY (1981)

***

Probably the best of the Roger Moore Bond epics this was certainly a big step up in quality from the previous (worst) entry *Moonraker*. In fact *Moonraker* cost so much money to make that the producers decided to cut costs this time round and bring us a "no frills" 007 adventure.

Surprisingly serious in tone and lacking the usual reliance on gadgetry and bad jokes, the plot has Moore joining forces with beautiful Carole Bouquet who is out to get the Soviet spies who killed her father. Olympic ice skater Lynn Holly Johnson also appears as a lovestruck teenager with a crush on 007 and the action is largely set amid lush Greek island locations. If you've ever been on holiday in Corfu you'll recognise some well known landmarks.

The stunts are some of the best in the series but they were not executed without danger. In fact a stuntman was killed during the exciting bobsled chase involving motorcyclists riding quite wheelied bikes.

Bernard Lee was due to reprise his long running role as Bond's crusty boss "M". But he died before the movie began production.

Cassandra Harris who plays Bond girl Lisl was married to future 007 Pierce Brosnan — sadly she died of cancer in the early 1990s.

Sheena Easton sings the title song.

Directed by John Glen.
United Artists/Eon
127 minutes. Panavision
Colour

FORCE BEYOND, THE (1978)

*

The director of *The Incredible Melting Man* strikes again with a no-budget loser in which some kids out in the Oregon woods see a flying saucer and a scary monster but of course no one will believe them.

You won't believe this movie either which seems to drag on forever without getting anywhere interesting.

Starring Don Elkins Peter Byrne.

Directed by William Sachs. Film Ventures.
94 minutes. Colour.

4-D MAN, THE (1959)

***

Colourful sci-fi from the director of *The Blob* and *Dinosaurus* featuring an excellent performance from Robert Lansing as a scientist who discovers a way of travelling in the fourth dimension and is able to walk through solid objects. But is he happy? Naaah!

His experiments age him prematurely and send him off his rocker. He regains his force by draining it out of others leading to lots of mummified corpses. In the end his fiancee Lee Meriwether sets out to track him into captivity but he escapes leading to a memorable final image.

Good special effects make up for the excess of dull sub-plots and this remains one of the most underrated of late 50s sci-fi flicks.

UK audiences saw it under the title of *The Evil Force*.

Also starring James Congdon Jasper Deeter.

Directed by Irwin S. Yeaworth. Universal
98 minutes. Colour

FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET (1972)

***

The most elusive of Argento's giallo movies this is actually a fairly mediocre thriller in which Michael Brandon (future star of TV's *Dempsey And Makepeace*) plays a rock star married to Mimsy Farmer whose friends are being bumped off by a phantom slasher.

Using laser technology the victims' eyes are photographed in the hope that they will reveal the image of the killer.

The resultant image resembles "four flies on grey velvet" hence the title.

Some graphic murders and a few stylish bits of camerawork, plus a not particularly surprising final twist add up to a mightily above average psychothriller which may disappoint all but the most devout of Argento buffs.

Ennio Morricone wrote the music. Also starring Jean Pierre Marielle Francine Racette.

Directed and written by Dario Argento.
Paramount.
101 minutes.
Colour

FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE (1953)

**

A pair of scientists in love with the same woman perform an squishy experiment by duplicating the beautiful Barbara Payton. Unfortunately for Stephen Murray both the original and its duplicate fall in love with his rival, John Van Eyssen (who was later to play Jonathan Harker in Hammer's *Dracula*).

Cheaply done talky sci-fi with a few embarrassing laboratory scenes. It's chiefly of interest to genre buffs in that it marks cult director Fisher's first foray into sci fi/fantasy.

Also starring Percy Marmont James Hayter.

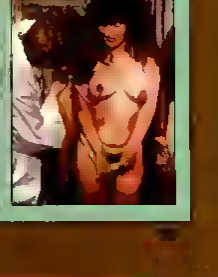
Directed by Terence Fisher.
Hammer
74 minutes
B/w

FOUR SKULLS OF JONATHAN DRAKE, THE (1959)

***

A nifty little programmer about a deadly curse placed on the Drake family (who were white slavers) by a tribe of Indian head hunters.

FRANKENSHOOKER



Eduard Franz as the unlucky recipient of the voodoo whammy and detective Grant Richards (who is always trying to quit smoking) is as hard to try to stop him losing his head.

It's fast moving quite atmospheric in places and have a neat final twist which is extremely evocative for a movie of its day.

A late show favourite that doesn't disappoint.

Also starring Henry Daniell.

Directed by Edward L Cahn.
United Artists
70 minutes.
B/w

4TH MAN, THE (1979)

***

A gay alcoholic writer (Jeroen Krabbe) begins an affair with a beautiful blonde hairdresser (Renee Soutendijk) – and as their relationship deepens he develops two obsessions: to sleep with his handsome young boyfriend (Thom Hoffman) and to discover what really happened to Soutendijk's three dead husbands.

FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN

This is an archetypal Paul Verhoeven film full of strikingly sexy imagery and punctuated by bouts of shocking violence – watch out for that grisly twist ending!

A shame about the poor dubbing, but this arty Dutch shocker is still well worth seeing.

Directed by Paul Verhoeven
104 minutes.
Colour

FRANKENHOOKER (1990)

**

Electrician James Lorenz accidentally runs over his girlfriend with a lawn mower and after rescuing her severed head decides to construct a new body for her out of spare parts taken from 42nd Street hookers. The hookers explode after puffing on a lethal brand of crack cocaine and before long Frankenhooker is born in this purse-swinging parodic *Penthouse* Pet Fairy Mullen.

Hennenlotter's fun spoof is obviously modelled on that drive-in favourite *The Brain That Wouldn't Die* and it has many funny moments thanks to the amusing playing of Mullen and Lorenz.

The gore is extreme in places but never offensive because of the film's cartoony tone. A bit more genuine wit would have made this memorable but as it is it is a treat for fans of low budget music.

Also starring Louise Lasser, Charlotte Helpckamp.

Directed and written by Frank Hennenlotter
Shapiro Glickenhaus.
82 minutes
Colour.

FRANKENSTEIN (1931)

****

"If you have a weak heart and cannot stand crime sentiment or even shock, we are advising you NOT to see this production" warned Universal in its advertising for this most famous of early sound horror films.

In fact people ran screaming down the aisles which is hard to believe nowadays when we are used to seeing sights a great deal more gruesome than dear old Boris Karloff with a bolt in his neck.

Frankenstein still retains its power to thrill though, particularly in the exceedingly staged laboratory scenes.

The story line is partly based on the Mary Shelley novel and partly on a stage play by Peggy Webling that was popular at the time.

Colin Clive stars as the obsessed Henry Frankenstein whose mad dream is to create an artificial man out of the dead diseases of corpses and bring the creature to life.

His noble intentions go on the rocks though when his half witted assistant (Fritz, the dwarf – played by Dwight Frye) picks a criminal brain to stick inside the monster's cranium.

The film made an overnight star of the 43 year-old Karloff who had previously been a bit player.

Studio boss Carl Laemmle threw out the line "Now I know what it feels like to be God!" because he felt it might offend the clergy and another scene in which Karloff's monster drowns a little girl was removed by the US censor (ironically it played in England but the British censors removed scenes where Karloff kills Edward Van Sloan and the scene bride-to-be Mae Clarke).

Recent laserdisc restorations are complete.

Bela Lugosi was going to play the monster under Robert Florey's direction but backed out because the part didn't offer him any dialogue. It was a bad move because he opened the way for his biggest rival and generally played second fiddle to Karloff for the rest of his career.

This is one of the best of all Frankenstein films, and it should be a lesson to filmmakers like Kenneth Branagh that this enduring classic manages to tell the story well in the short space of just over an hour.

Also starring Edward Van Sloan, John Boles, Francis Ford.

Directed by James Whale.

Universal
71 minutes
B/w

FRANKENSTEIN (1972)

**

A faithful but routine TV version of the famous Shelley story with Robert Foxworth pretty effective as the obsessed Doctor and Bo Svenson even better as the unexpectedly sad and sensitive monster.

Produced by Dan (*Dark Shadows*) Curtis at about the same time as he was bringing us "definitive" versions of *Dracula* and *Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde*, this decent enough production is let down by overlength and cheap shot-on-video production values.

Also starring Susan Strasberg, Robert Gentry, Heidi Vaughan.

Directed by Glenn Jordan.
128 minutes.
Colour

FRANKENSTEIN (1984)

*

A good cast struggle through a weak TV version of Mary Franklin's story drawn from a Broadway play that bombed after a single performance!

David Warner is good as the scar faced monster but Robert Powell is badly miscast as a dummy Frankenstein and Carrie Fisher is equally uneasy as his innocent fiancee.

Poor quality production values and a flat shot on tape feel make this hard going for all but the most dedicated of Frankenstein completists.

FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD

Also starring John Gielgud, Michael Cochrin, Terence Alexander, Susan Woolridge, Edward Judd.

Directed by James Ormrod.
74 minutes.
Colour

FRANKENSTEIN (1993)

***

An impressively mounted and generally interesting TV version of the story which successfully goes for the epic mini series approach. This stars Patrick Bergin as the scientist who creates a monster clone of himself in the shape of Randy Quaid.

The creature is rejected by society and goes on a murder rampage ruining his creator's life until Bergin agrees to make him a female partner.

Good strong splendid makeup and fine individual scenes (John Mills is particularly affecting as the blind hermit who becomes Quaid's friend) can't quite overcome the familiarity of the tale, and in the end this version is as redundant as the Branagh movie that followed it.

Both films pale beside *Frankenstein: The True Story* which remains the definitive telling of the tale at epic length.

Now if only Hollywood would leave it alone.

Also starring Fiona Gillies, Lambert Wilson, Michael Gothard.

Directed by David Wickes
Turner
116 minutes
Colour

FRANKENSTEIN (1994)

***

Kenny Branagh's "definitive" filming of the Shelley story is pretty much the same as previous "definitive" versions served up by Jack Smight and David Wickes... only it has a bigger budget because it was made for cinemas and not the telly.

It is actually a very respectable job with a standout laboratory reaction scene and extremely impressive production values.

Robert De Niro is good as the monster and Richard Briers is even better as the blind hermit he has a tragic encounter with.

The opening half is great in fact, but Branagh can't sustain interest when the story drags on to take in the usual trip to the North Pole and the unfortunate between monster and creator which furnishes the story with a drawbacked climax.

A worthy try but nothing new, so what's the point.

Also *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*.

Also starring Ian Holm, Helena Bonham Carter.

Directed by Kenneth Branagh
Columbia.
128 minutes.
Colour

FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL (1974)

**

Terence Fisher's Hammer horror swansong is the seventh and least interesting of the studio's Frankenstein series which substitutes river the top gore for plot twists and misty atmospheres.

Shane Briant is a young doctor experimenting with reviving the dead, who is shocked into a lunatic asylum for his trouble.

There he meets his idol Peter Cushing's Baron Frankenstein, who is actually running the place as an ideal front for his own unorthodox work.

Together they continue their work transferring the brain of a brilliant mathematician into the body of an ugly hairy brute of a man (played by Darth Vader-to-be Dave Prowse) which means a bit of a nonsequitur when you consider what he achieved in *Frankenstein Created Woman*.

The monster is fine at first, but quickly develops a taste for human flesh (nb Michael Gwynn in *The Revenge Of Frankenstein*).

The monster has a habit of throwing glasses into people's faces like a pub hooligan and there are extra b and gibbets everywhere in the final scene.

Unfortunately no amount of ketchup can disguise a thin plot and a franchise that has run out of steam.

Also starring Madeline Smith, Bernard Lee.

Directed by Terence Fisher.
Hammer
93 minutes
Colour

FRANKENSTEIN MET IS THE SPACE MONSTER

FRANNENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD (1964)

**

The Japanese monster industry adopts the Frankenstein legend with painful results.

The he him plot involves the transfer of the Frankenstein monster's heart from Nazi Germany to Japan during WWII where it is caught in the atomic blast that wiped out Hiroshima.

A starving Japanese youngster happens across it and decides to serve himself a Frankenburger after which he grows into a giant with a high forehead and some pretty fearsome gnashers.

Dressing up like a superman he goes to live on Mount Fuji where he gets into a no contemps with another giant monster Baragon, who looks like a second cousin to Godzilla.

Some stills from this movie show a giant octopus but this never actually appears.

Nick Adams is the obligatory American star playing a friendly scientist out to help the Japs rebuild Hiroshima, and ends up as referee in the monster slugfest.

Pretty awful by any standard, but good photography and fun effects make this just about worthwhile.

Susan Denbury gets a head in FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN

Also starring Tadao Takashima, Kimi Mizuno, Yoshio Tsuchiya.

Directed by Inoshiro Honda
Toho/AIP
87 minutes.
Tohoscope
Colour

FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN (1965)

**

The fourth In Hammer's Frankenstein cycle finds Peter Cushing dabbling in the Faustian sins of soul transfer since which seems like a better bet for success – after all, you can't run a mad in a jar by having your bunch hacked and/or drop it, can you?

This time round Cushing transplants the soul of an executed young man (Barry Warren) into the body of the lad's female lover who committed suicide after he been was killed. To make life sweet for his new creation, he even uses a bit of plastic surgery to turn the once ugly girl into a ravishing beauty.

But things quickly turn nasty as the girl uses her new found powers of seduction to seek gruesome revenge on those who brought about his/her unjust execution.

Released on a double-bill with *The Mummy's Shroud* this is a fairly enjoyable addition to the series with some atmospheric scenes and a plot that holds the interest.

Unfortunately it's let down by the so-so acting of *Playboy* Playmate Susan Denberg in the lead role and a downbeat climax that cheats the audience of the expected confrontation between monster and creator.

The high living Denberg tragically committed suicide in real life a few years after the movie was released.

Also starring Thorley Walters, Derek Fowlds, Robert Morris, Peter Blythe, Duncan Lamont.

FRANKENSTEIN '80 (1973)

*

A mad scientist steals another doctor's revolutionary anti rejection serum for organ transplants in order to use it on the man made creature he has named "Mosaic." The hideously scarred monster goes out on the town quite a lot either to kill people for their organs or to have violent sex with pro attitude.

A pretty bad Italian thriller that's not anywhere near as interesting as it sounds from the plot description.

Starring John Richardson, Renato Romano, Xiro Papas.

Directed by Mario Mancini.
M G D
Film.
89 minutes.
Colour

FRANKENSTEIN '88 (See THE VINDICATOR)

FRANKENSTEIN GENERAL HOSPITAL (1988)

*

Young Dr Seth Frankenstein (Mark Blankfield) (great-great grandson) of you know who makes use of his secret hospital lab in the basement of LA General to create his own creature in this dire spoof of the famous Shelley story.

At one point Dr Seth says "We've done it, great-great grandfather" and the camera zooms in on a picture of Colin Clive in the original Universal *Frankenstein*.

But such moments of inspiration are few and far between and this could very well lay claim to being the worst Frankenstein movie ever made – which is really saying some thing.

Also starring Kathy Shower, Leslie Jordan.

Directed by Deborah Roberts.
New Star Entertainment.
92 minutes.
Colour

FRANKENSTEIN ISLAND (1981)

*

Famed trash movie guru Jerry Warren remakes his own *Teenage Zombies* with a veteran cast who must all have been going through some very hard times indeed to lend their name to such low grade junk.

The fun (if you can call it that) starts when four ball-bearing crash land on an uncharted island inhabited by bikini clad bimbos and Sheila Frankenstein, great great grandaughter of the famed mitch up mechanist.

The confused plot brings in disembodied brains, zombie sailors and of course the Frankenstein monster himself who doesn't actually turn up until the last reel to take part in a free for all fracas that sinks the picture as a suitably ludicrous one.

With plentiful stock footage of John Carradine that seems to bear no relation to what's going on in this movie Warren fans will not be disappointed. Others should walk a mile to avoid it.

Starring Cameron Mitchell, Robert Clarke, Katherine Victor and Steve Brodie.

Directed by Jerry Warren
Astral Films
98 minutes. Colour.

FRANKENSTEIN – ITALIAN STYLE (1965)

*

A terrible Italian exploitation movie wherein Frankenstein's monster (Aldo Maccione) interrupts his creator's wedding ceremony and ends up performing sad services for his grand father [illegible] and servant before the [illegible] plants the monster in [illegible] sex [illegible] in one himself – a scene the later turned up in Mel Brooks hilarious spoof *Young Frankenstein*.

A waste of celluloid.

Starring Gianrico Tedeschi, Nunzio Davoli, Jenny Tamburi.

Directed by Armando Crispino.
Euro Internationale.
97 minutes
Colour

FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL

FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE SPACE MONSTER (1965)

**

Nothing whatsoever to do with Mary Shelley's famed creation, this enjoyably hokey movie was actually shot under the more appropriate title of *Mars In Miniskirts*. *Puerto Rico*. The Frankenstein of the title is a NASA android named Frank (Robert Reilly) who crash lands his space craft and eventually finds himself battling some bald-headed, bug-eyed aliens (who are in town because they want to repopulate their planet with Puerto Rican beach bunnies).

You'd have to fast forward through through loads of grainy stock footage of rockets taking off but it's worth it for some nifty peul party material where the aliens appear in a rock and roll bash to swipe some bimbos.

Frank gets blasted in the face with a ray gun and thereafter resembles a Frankenstein monster which is handy for the new title.

He goes berserk at first, and carries off a bimbo or two for himself but eventually he is rewarded by good scientists James Karen and Nancy Marshall and much hilarity ensues when he takes on the monstrous Mull – a creature so silly that even the producers of *Doctor Who* would surely have rejected it.

Watch carefully as Frank battles with Mull and neatly pulls his mask off! A must see for bad movie fans.

Also starring Marilyn Hanold, Lou Cutell.

Directed by Robert Gaffney.
Allied Artists
75 minutes.
B/w

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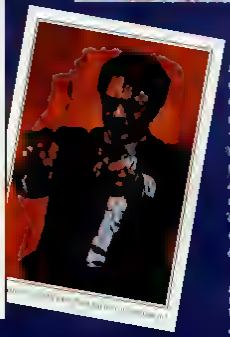

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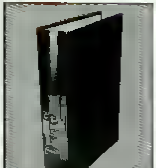

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NURSERY CRIMES!

As Disney's TOY STORY hurtles through the $175 million barrier, the production company behind it, Pixar, have announced that their next production is to be BUGS, another animated version of a short they made several years ago. But all is not sweetness and industrial light and magic in their relations with the Mouse Kingdom. Pixar's cut of the revenue are believed to be less than 10% and Disney executives have been less than kind in the press about the Pixar's founder Steve Jobs, co-inventor of the original Apple Macintosh computer. Much of the bad feeling is believed to have been caused by Disney approaching TOY STORY's director John Lasseter and trying to get him to leave Pixar and join them, which he declined! Still, I doubt Steve Jobs

sophisticated historic/erotic which has turned into the Amazonian rain forest. Jurgen Prochnow co-stars. KNB Effects will be handling the creature effects and the screenplay is by frequent John Eyres' collaborator Nick Davis.

CELLULOID CLIPS

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS moves into production with MUTE WITNESS director Anthony Waller at the helm, and proposed casting for the lead roles is believed to be US soap star Tobey MacGuire (who he?) and Julie Delpy (from KILLING ZOE and BEFORE SUNRISE). Budget is estimated at around $30 million and several effects houses have been asked to tender for the transformation tasks...

Meanwhile news hits us of another rather more interesting rounding Werewolf turning around in London. CRIMSON MOON, due to start shooting imminently, is to be "a stylish and very scary contemporary lycanthropy tale", according to producer Richard Lucas. Rik Mayall is set to play the earthier lead. Richard Lucas was also making RECKONING, the haunting short seen late last year on Channel 4, a remarkable vignette with Kate Hardie appearing in a reel on the verge of rabidly and explaining his possible happenings in the future if he tried/tried not to go through with it. Sadly the director of RECKONING, Richard Gunford, was found dead shortly after production at the age of only 27. A sad loss.

Things are still not going at all Clive Barker's way. After BLOODLINE, HELLRAISER IV seemingly ending itself in limbo and the critical and box-office derouting of LORD OF ILLUSIONS it seems as if his animated children's film THE THIEF OF ALWAYS is also in doubt. Apparently Paramount has stopped all pre-production on the film, along with a couple of other unrelated animated projects. A live-action version of Barker's book is now being mentioned...

The shape of things to come, as expounded upon by our resident seer Mystic Martin – Coxhead, that is!

Dark Visions

[illegible] what the Disney bods [illegible] about him behind his back. The stock market flotation of Pixar, carefully timed to coincide with the opening of the much-anticipated TOY STORY, made him on paper a dollar billionaire. Yes, you read it right, a *billionaire!*

COMIC CUTS

And the comic book to film trail grinds on.....

Announced as coming in the last issue KULL THE CONQUEROR a fur-clad barbarian character created by CONAN author Robert E Howard is Kevin Sorbo, the muscle-bound lead of the Sam Raimi-produced HERCULES TV series. Also being planned to go to the big screen from the small one is THE GREEN HORNET, with George Clooney taking the Van Johnson part and Jason Scott Lee playing Kato, the Bruce Lee role in the original and for which Scott Lee (no relation) donned the chauffeurs' hat and gloves in a segment of DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY.

CRYING FREEMAN star Mark Dacascos takes the lead in D.N.A., the newest from effects wizard William Malone, his second directorial project after TERMINAL FORCE. Sounding, we have to admit, rather PREDATOR-like, the muscular Dacascos is set on the trail of a genetically-

William Malone directs Brigitte Nielsen in TERMINAL FORCE

TALES FROM THE BRIT-CRYPT

In an odd move, the HBO cable hit TALES FROM THE CRYPT enters its seventh season with the Crypt Keeper finding a new home - the old BBC studios at Television City, West London. The production base is shifting from the States for another thirteen episodes, all with - so far unannounced - celebrity directors. With British media (pure gutting) more and more under Murdoch control, good news comes to be from Leavesden Aerodrome, now owned by the company Third Millennium, who laid out a cool £43 million for the site. The production base of GOLDENEYE has earned itself a good reputation after the smoothness of that shoot and has been heading after more big budget productions to take advantage of the vast space and facilities. Productions hoping to be lured in are James Cameron's TITANIC, Spielberg's INDIANA JONES 4 and George Lucas' proposed STAR WARS continuation trilogy (whenever that's by).

DEAD EDDIE!

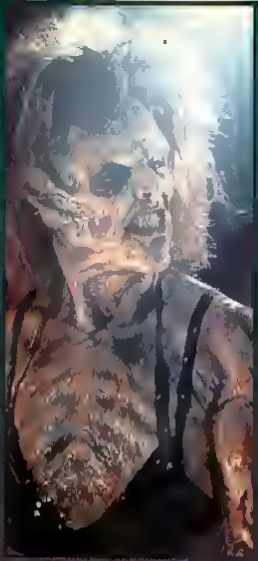
It sounded like a last-gasp effort, even with Wes Craven behind the camera, but Eddie Murphy's comeback gamble (after the &*%ing awful BEVERLY HILLS COP III), A VAMPIRE IN BROOKLYN has turned out to be a major stiff. The lid came down on this particular coffin with the film making less than $20 million at the box-office, against costs before prints and advertising estimated at at least $40 million. BEVERLY HILLS COP IV anyone?

And as we you're not, you're bet. Paul Anderson (director of MORTAL KOMBAT and SHOPPING (although we can really mention that flop these days), is tipped to be signed by Warner Brothers for SOLDIER, a proposed BLADE RUNNER sequel, which may or may not be produced in conjunction with Ridley Scott's intended sequel. Seems we'll be knee-deep in replicants some next year.

Not only that but Anderson has also been connected with the film adaptation of the Robert Heinlein classic THE STARS MY DESTINATION, to be produced by Fox and budgeted at a pitiling $50 million (see how easily we handy about huge sums of money on these pages!) Funny that only three years ago Paul Anderson was directing shampoo commercials. (Heinlein seems to be the flavour of the year. Paul Verhoeven, still reeling after the debacle of SHOWGIRLS, has been linked to a big budget version of the author's space opera, STARSHIP TROOPERS.

CAROLCO TERMINATED!

And we'll have cyborgs too, if master manipulator Rupert Murdoch gets his way. Rupert now owns Carolco, after 20th Century Fox picked it up for an equally ri-



TALES FROM THE CRYPT: BORDELLO OF BLOOD

Dark Visions

Crypt Keeper always gets a good table in restaurants!

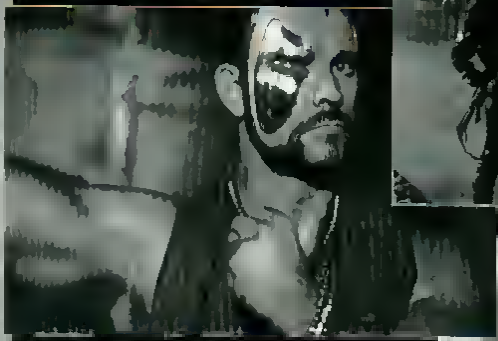
fling $50 million. This not only gives them the Carolco library and such hits as TOTAL RECALL and BASIC INSTINCT, but also sequel rights to many of the hot properties. And big Rupe has made it very plain he wants TERMINATOR 3 on screens by late 97/early 98 with or without the contributions of James Cameron and TOTAL RECALL 2 to be close on it's heels. Of course the real winner in the deal is Carolco's ex boss Mario Kassar, who walks away from the burning wreckage of his company with lots of dollars, share options, office furniture, boxes of paper clips, reams of his paper, you know the stuff of thing.

CHEWING THE FAT!

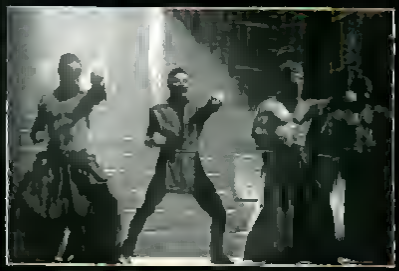
Not strictly genre but we like, he kind of it anyway is KILLING MOMENT KILLERS high speed action thriller co-produced in the U.S by John Woo and his long time production partner Terence Chang. The story of an unlikely alliance between a hit man and a forger, it's also is the debut in a Stateside movie of the peerless Chow Yun Fat. Expect catchy music, gun play and a body count off get ex [illegible] proportions.

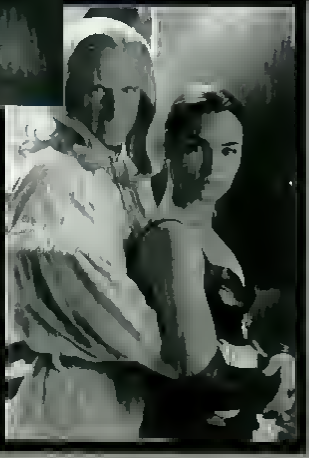
Clive Barker's LORD OF ILLUSIONS

TERMINATOR 2



MORTAL KOMBAT





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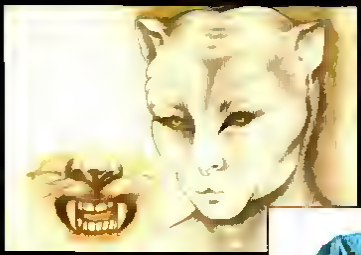
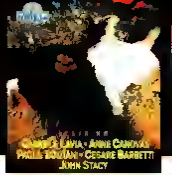
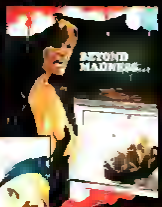
Pupi Love

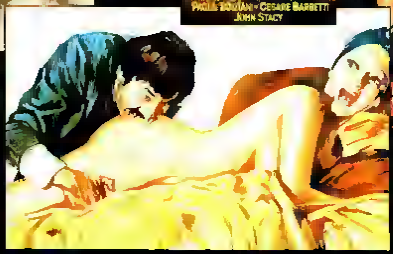
From Findus frozen foods to chillers on the movie screen, the secret horror history of cult Italian filmmaker Pupi Avati is unearthed by John Martin...



Left: An artist's impression of THE CAT PEOPLE







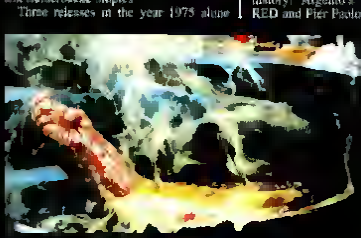
Left: DRACULA IN THE PROVINCES!

DEEP RED, MACABRE, SALO 120 DAYS OF SODOM, DRACULA IN THE PROVINCES... what is the common denominator between these very diverse Italian shockers? The answer is the little-known involvement in all of them of Giuseppe "Pupi" Avati (born 3/10/38), whose self-directed horror epics such as ZEDER – VOICES FROM BEYOND and THE HOUSE WITH LAUGHING WINDOWS also – tragically – remain some of Pasta Pasta's best kept secrets among English-speaking audiences.

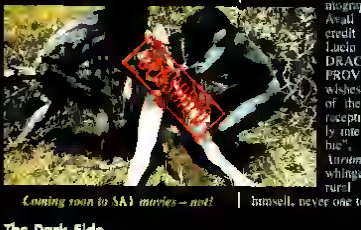
Avati's stock with Anglo-American horror buffs is unlikely to rise on account of future genre efforts either, for regrettably, at a time when every idiot in Italy who can lift a camcorder is currently churning out unwatchable horror efforts Avati has largely turned his back on our genre to concentrate on such well-received, lucrative mainstream efforts as his Mozart and Bix Beiderbecke biopics

Three releases in the year 1975 alone testify to the extent of Avati's secret horror history: Argento's classic giallo DEEP RED and Pier Paolo Pasolini's scandalous transposition of De Sade to Mussolini's Italy SALO both received uncredited script input from Avati (beside the obvious Sadean content of both their use of damned houses and sinister rooms in which unspeakable acts have taken/are taking place are clearly attributable to Avati's personal dark pre-occupations as his subsequent filmography would reveal)

> **"Who can resist lyrics such as, "by the time I was twelve, I was killing, killing for Satan? – Andrew Lloyd Webber eat your heart out! "**



Anyone for CAT PEOPLE *soup?*



Coming soon to SA's movies – not!

Avati received a scripting credit on the same year's Lucio Fulci horror comedy DRACULA IN THE PROVINCES but possibly wishes he hadn't, in the light of the film's poor critical reception (it' has been widely interpreted as "homophobic", *and Phil Hardy's Aurum Encyclopaedia* whinged about its "retarded rural Catholicism") Fulci himself, never one to give much credence to Political Correctness, is quite pleased with the picture, but not with Avati's contribution to it, nor indeed with Avati himself

While I was interviewing Fulci for EXPLORING THE SEA OF DARKNESS, my upcoming book on him, he was characteristically candid on this score "We just spoke on the phone really I was helping Avati out, because he had no money Of course, he has never shown me any gratitude for this. The guy's a turn-coat always changing his political leanings depending on which way the wind is blowing first he was a Christian Democrat, then he was with Berlusconi now he says he's a communist... a miserable man and I don't care for him as a director either (come on Lucio, stop beating about the bush and tell us what you really think!)

THE SHOCKING SIXTIES!

As a young man Avati had taken a degree in political sciences and worked for Findus frozen foods before progressing to chillers of another kind. But this young turk was immersed in the culture and folk lore of his native Emilia Romagna region – a land seemingly designed by nature to inculcate a penchant for the grotesque in its inhabitants. As a boy, Avati frequented freak shows, a popular local entertainment and a local legend about a dead priest being disinterred and revealed to have been a woman provided the germ of an idea for one of his ▶

SOLOMON AND SHEBA – a *Brad Stevens widescreen favourite!*

movies THE HOUSE WITH LAUGHING WINDOWS. He was also impatient with Imperial Roman arrogance, and couldn't see why movies shouldn't be made in Bologna.

1966's BALSAMUS THE DEVIL'S MAN which deals with a faith healer was based on the historical figure of Cagliostro (though a dwarf) and hinges upon the trade off between sexual and spiritual energy. Next came 1969's THOMAS THE POSSESSED concerning the conjuring of an angelic/demonic child. Avati's initial late 60's regional horror period turned up mixed results, and the director himself now concedes that THOMAS was a pretty overblown affair.

Having contributed to the scripts of the impressive selection of genre efforts outlined above, he worked as assistant director on the likes of Piero Vivarelli's SATANIK (1967) and directed the commercially unsuccessful sex fantasy BORDELLA ('WOMEN'S BROTHEL' 1975 which included an 'invisible man' sequence on which Mario Bava acted as FX consultant). Then Avati returned to his homeland to make a bona fide (and infuriatingly still largely unknown) horror masterpiece 1976's THE HOUSE WITH LAUGHING WINDOWS (the maiden effort for his AMA production company formed with his brother and frequent script collaborator Antonio).

In this almost unbearably oppressive effort Lino Capolicchio arrives in a rural backwater to restore a flaky fresco of St Sebastian being martyred by two obscure figures, their faces rotted away by years of neglect. Made to feel distinctly unwelcome and plagued by anonymous threats from somebody who wants the fresco left as it is, Capolicchio discovers that the artist (Lightfoot known as 'The Painter of Agonies') hiked to paint from life his sisters torturing innocent victims as he worked at his easel (one such session is depicted in the film's unforgettably disturbing title sequence). The artist is now dead, ducked in a vat of formaldehyde (this ill preserved remains recalling the walled up patriarch in DEEP RED) by his loony siblings who seem loathe to give up their work – and guess who they want to model for them! Just when it looks as though the hapless restorer has escaped, one of the most outrageous transvestite revelations in film history (THE CRYING GAME be damned) seals his grisly fate.

HEAD IN A FRIDGE!

Filmed in the dialect of Emilia Romagna region this one (I'm reliably informed) has never even been officially available on video in Italy. Like Francesco Barilli's PERFUME OF THE LADY IN BLACK it's a film that flopped on its release, only to be re-appraised and hailed as a masterpiece in these lean times for Pasta Paura buffs. In the immediate aftermath of its failure though, Avati played safe with 1977's TUTTI DEFUNTI TRANNE I MORTI a horror comedy variant on 'Ten Little Indians' (It's doubtful whether he could have managed anything as intense as HOUSE again in such a short space of time anyway).

Although the laurels are usually conceded to Argento, Avati has been described as the true heir to Mario Bava's legacy. Indeed, he co-wrote MACABRE (1980) the directorial debut of Bava's son Lamberto and the only film in a rapidly self destructing career that really lived up to that august family name. Avati's stamp is detectable on the picture's premise, i.e. a collection of truly crazed characters cooped up in a ramshackle house in over-heated New Orleans. The versatile Bernice Steggers (fresh from her stint with Fellini and en route to *Four Weddings And A Funeral* via Harry Bromley Davenport's *Xtro!*) is a fruitily dubbed hysterical Southern belle who keeps her decapitated lover Fred a bounce in the fridge periodically bringing it out for sex sessions that are left mercifully undetailed.

Meanwhile blind lodger Stanko Molnar (in a role that nearly went to Michele Soavi, trivia buffs) divides his time between secretly lusting after her and furtively ferreting through her fish fingers to try and find out the secret of her freezer. Can they surmount these little difficulties and find true love? Not if Steggers' psychopathic sibling drowning daughter has anything to do with it.

These unlikely ingredients are whipped into a compelling and chilling composite (TUSNELDA is evident in both Bava and Avati

Gabriele Lavia drags his wife to the K Zone in ZEDER

> **"It's the very quality of Avati's horror offerings that have left genre fans cursing his defection to more commercial fare..."**

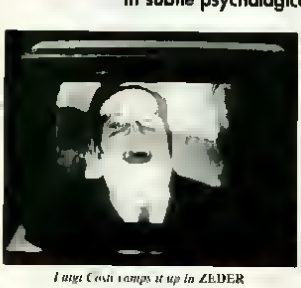
the enthralled viewer's disbelief until the final frame– when an infuriating 'shock' twist completely blows the film's "based on a true story" claim– heads you lose (credibility) Lamberto

ZEDER – VOICES FROM BEYOND

BACK TO THE K-ZONE!

Avati's next notable directorial outing from our point of view was 1983's ZEDER – VOICES FROM BEYOND. To avoid the problems he had experienced on THE HOUSE WITH LAUGHING WINDOWS, Avati relented and shot this one in English. DEEP RED's Gabriele Lavia (who later complained that this cramped his performance) plays Stefano, a struggling writer who unravels a mystery along with his new

> **"It's same testament to both Bava and Avati that a film in which a severed head plays such a prominent part can still cames across as an exercise in subtle psychalagical terrarl"**



Luigi Cosa vamps it up in ZEDER

typewriter ribbon on which he discovers the imprint of a mysterious letter. His reckless curiosity (it's worth noting here that Avati once worked as an investigative reporter) puts him on the trail of a secretive group of parapsychologists. Their mentor is the late Paolo Zeder, who claimed to have discovered the existence of space/time warps that he called "K Zones". Zeder postulated that the dead might be able to return through these portals.

Stefano sinks every deeper into a paranoid world of betrayal and conspiracy (evoked here with the same effortless brilliance as in Aldo Lado's SHORT NIGHT OF THE GLASS DOLLS and Barilli's PERFUME) as Zeder's followers begin to eliminate everyone they consider a threat to their aims, which includes Stefano's wife Alessandra (the absolutely gorgeous Anne Canovas, an actress I'd like to see a lot more of). There's also the little matter of the returnees coming back from the beyond as soulless, murderous ghouls. Not that this stops Stefano from dragging Alessandra's body to the nearest K Zone with predictably chilling results.

We're used to simplistic descriptions of cinematic larceny as a one way street between Hollywood and Italy, but just ponder the similarities between this excellent film and Stephen King's much later novel PET SEMATARY and, of course, Mary Lambert's pedestrian film adaptation (not to mention Michele Soavi's more recent DELLAMORE DELLAMORTE on the domestic front). The character of Paolo Zeder reflects Avati's fascination with the historical figure Fulcanelli, the occult alumnus who wrote Mysteries Of The Cathedrals and also crops up in Soavi's THE CHURCH and (in disguised form) promising Mexican director Guillermo Del Torro's accomplished feature debut CRONOS.

A keen student of such esoteric disciplines, Avati claims that he had wanted to make another film about Fulcanelli, the Templars and certain ancient Biblical mysteries, which was supposedly scuppered by RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK stealing its thunder (a likely story, since when have Italian directors ever shied away from riding on the coat tails of an American box-office smasheroo?!?).

FINAL REVELATIONS

Since 1983, Avati has continued to directing his increasingly acclaimed mainstream efforts. His recent THE ARCANE ENCHANTER remains unseen and the modest English-language remake of HOUSE WITH LAUGHING WINDOWS has yet to materialise. His involvement in the horror and fantasy genres has been largely limited to dubbings in production (e.g. Fabrizio Laurenti's LA STANZA ACCANTA/THE ADJOINING ROOM) and further scripting chores as on Maurizio Zaccaro's DOVE COMINCIA LA NOTTE/WHERE THE NIGHT BEGINS (1990), another spooky "house of suppressed secrets" efforts produced by Antonio Avati, using an Italo American crew nicely tuned up from just having shot Avati's Beiderbecke biopic BIX (Avati's clarinetist and jazz buff has identified his own favourite among his own pictures as LE STRELLE NEL FOSSO due to its improvised, jazz like structure).

It's the very quality of Avati's horror offerings that have left genre fans cursing his defection to more commercial fare. Perhaps his absence has been a mixed blessing. Avati's stated aim is to search for magic and mystery in everyday life, but when unveiled, the revelation is (as in many a Clive Barker story, e.g. *The Midnight Meat Train*) invariably a shattering one for his protagonist, and deeply disturbing for the viewer. I'm not too sure that my heart could stand too many more films like THE HOUSE WITH LAUGHING WINDOWS! ❐

PRINTS OF DARKNESS

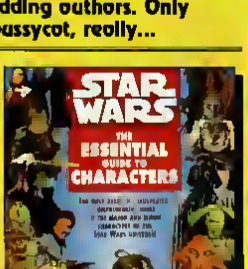
He said "I'll be back," and he wasn't lying: Stan Nicholls returns to terminate the careers of a number of budding authors. Only joking, he's a pussycat, really...

Storm Constantine's STALKING TENDER PREY (Creed, pb 5.99) volume one in a trilogy was inspired by ancient legends of the Grigori, a Greek word that translates as Watchers. The Watchers were angels, messengers of God, whose role was to act as a kind of celestial police force over Humanity. (This is a familiar theme in Constantine's work, and formed the basis of her debut trilogy the Wraeththu sequence.) The old stories tell how some of the Watchers rebelled, or fell, took human wives and produced a hybrid race, the Nefilim. Over time the Grigori blended in with humans, although their considerably longer lives prevented them from fully integrating, and they accrued financial and political clout.

But eventually a schism develops. One group of Grigori want to give humankind forbidden knowledge as part of a plan to regain the power lost by the Fallen Ones when expelled from Eden. The key to this power lies in passing psychically through a stargate in Orion. Other Grigori oppose this, preferring to go back to a purity of life that involves accepting their banishment from Eden. This all forms the background to an alternate history England in which STALKING TENDER PREY is set.

Feverel Othman, a Grigori who has wandered for centuries, supports the group that wants to regain the Fallen Ones' powers. He arrives in a North of England village, Little Moor, and soon orphan twins Lily and Owen, and their friends Verity and Daniel, are drawn under his influence. Mystery surrounds an abandoned mansion that once belonged to a Grigori family, the Murkasters, all of whom disappeared in strange circumstances twenty years before. Many of the villagers were dependents of the Murkasters, so that, although human, they have been conferred degrees of psychic power. It transpires that Lily and Owen were born of a union between the Murkaster patriarch and a human mother. Othman rejuvenates a sterile woman through weird sex practices that include letting her drink his blood. Verity and Daniel, a crippled father is also healed by sex with Othman. He agrees to sacrifice Daniel on Hallowe'en in order to rekindle the sacred flame in the Murkasters' burned temple. The expected result will be that he and Othman will gain access to the stargate and unlimited power, but it will mean the end of Humanity in its present form. Not to mention a terrible fate for Lily, Owen, Verity and Daniel. At which point the four young people discover that they have an unsuspected guardian. Can he save them?

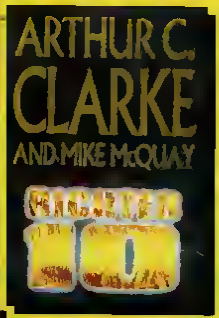
At 648 pages and somewhat slow moving at the outset, this could have done with a little judicious cutting. Nevertheless, it's atmospheric, the language is rich and the settings vivid. Constantine stays firmly in control of the intricate plot, conveying the necessary information deftly by shuffling the characters so that the experience of each forwards the story. Tension is built gradually but expertly, leading to a brilliantly handled denouement. Extensive research into Genesis and other creation myths obviously went into the gestation of the novel, making for a colourful, cohesive and uniquely imaginative narrative. Storm Constantine's fans will love this dark phantasmagoria; late teens and early twenties with Goth leanings will think it's brilliant.

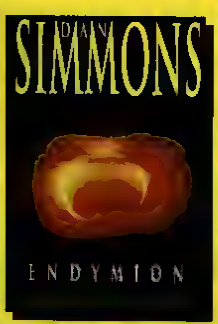


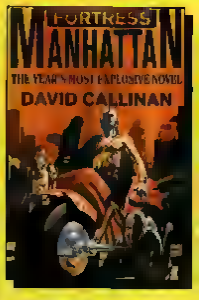
DAN, DAN, THE SCI-FI SAGA MAN!

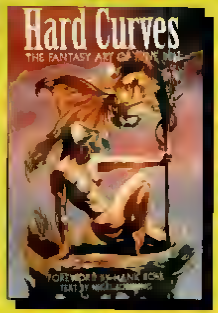
For science fiction enthusiasts, the appearance of the long awaited new volume in Dan Simmons' award winning Hyperion sequence, ENDYMION (Headline, hb 16.99), is a real treat. Set in 3126AD, 250 years after the events in the previous books HYPERION and THE FALL OF HYPERION, the novel posits a galactic empire dominated by an all pervasive Church. Its military force, Pax, is the stick. The carrot is cruciform symbiotes, implants guaranteeing believers resurrection three days after death, a literal born again Christianity. Hero Raul Endymion thinks bondage to Church too high a price for immortality and refuses the cruciform. Even imminent execution following a sham murder rap won't convert him. But he wakes from what should be final oblivion on another part of the planet Hyperion having been stunned rather than killed by bribed executioners.

His rescuer is ancient poet Martin Silenus, author of legendary epic saga Cantos, which is forbidden by Church because it tells Hyperion's true history (For Raul, meeting the man who wrote the Cantos is roughly equivalent to finding that Homer is still alive.) Silenus wants Raul to find an extraordinary girl called Aenea, a prophesied messiah – the One Who Teaches, whose birth was engineered by vanished cybernetic civilisation AI TechnoCore. She entered the Valley of the Time Tombs when she was thirteen and hasn't been seen in the 247 years since. But Silenus knows that the duration of her time trip is 247 years. She'll step out of the portal in 42 hours. Church/Pax also know this, and the threat Aenea poses them, so they have 30,000 crack troops surrounding the time tombs in anticipation of her return. In the finest tradition of the lone hero in sf, Raul agrees to try outwitting them. If he manages that, the next trick Silenus wants









him to pull off is finding Old Earth, which just about everyone assumes was destroyed centuries before.

Simmons, who has probably never turned out a bad book, has an enviable ability to write sf, fantasy or horror with equal facility. But for my money he's best at this kind of thrilling, glitzy idea-packed space opera. The genre is rarely graced with the level of classy sophistication he brings to it. ENDYMION can be read without reference to the previous volumes, but if you do you'll probably want to seek them out.

IMITATION CLARKE

Arthur C. Clarke's past achievements justify viewing him as the most influential living sf author. Lately he's been content to collaborate or to generate concepts for other writers, as in RICHTER 10 (Gollancz, hb 15.99). His only contribution to this story, set in 2024 and telling of a scientist obsessed with perfecting earthquake prediction, was the $50 word outline that inspired it. (Turned down by Stanley Kubrick because he's too busy developing his sf movie *AI*.) The actual writing chores were undertaken by the late Mike McQuay. It's a sound, if slightly overblown imitation of A.C.C.'s style.

The book is light on extrapolation, the most interesting bit of prophecy being the portrayal of Chinese super-corporations rising to dominate the western world. RICHTER 10 is more high-tech thriller than hardcore sf. It's a little formulaic, but competently done, and in places quite exciting. As a piece of popular entertainment it isn't too bad, even if it lacks the authentic A.C.C. spark. Ha's quite honest about his contribution. Incidentally, explaining in the foreword how minimal his input was, and the original outline is printed as an appendix. Unfortunately, but also understandably in marketing terms, the book's jacket gives no hint of the level of Clarke's involvement.

When it comes to heroic fantasy, nobody does it better than David Gemmell. His latest, THE LEGEND OF DEATHWALKER (Bantam Press, hb 15.99), recounts an early episode in the life of Druss the Axeman, first introduced in the author's debut novel, LEGEND. In fact, this story starts in the middle of LEGEND: on the walls of Dros Delnoch, the fortress the ageing Druss defended, along with a handful of other warriors, against the massed hordes of the Nadir tribes. To support a nervous, raw young fighter, Druss relates an adventure that took place three decades before, when he was 30. While representing his people in the Drenai as a fist fighter at the Fifth Fellowship Games in Gothir capital Gulgothir, Druss became embroiled in political and military manoeuvres to gain the Eyes of Achuazzar, a pair of fabulous gems. The jewels have both magical power and symbolic relevance for the oppressed Nadir tribes, long under the heel of their Gothir conquerors. The Gothir king is mad, ravaged by a diseased mind. Real power resides in his minister Gareo Tseo, a ruthless power-hungry conniver who lusts after the jewels himself. He eventually sends 5000 men against the boy ragged Nadir army defending the tomb where they lie. But in a neat twist on the plot of LEGEND, on this occasion Druss has taken up the Nadir cause and is leading them.

We have the usual wonderfully clear, readable style, a great villain, exotic locations and mighty deeds performed by characters drawn with a truly gifted eye for our unusual characters of a depth and complexity not often found in the fantasy genre. As ever, the action is authentic and entirely plausible, and the consequences of violence aren't shunned. Druss, the Silver Slayer – Deathwalker to the awed Nadir – is a classic creation. Gemmel's canon comprises a rich and captivating tapestry of mythic imagination. As a weaver of genuinely stirring heroic tales, it's hard to see anyone in the field to touch him. ▶

Gemmell has changed publishers with THE LEGEND OF DEATHWALKER. His previous house Legend recently put out THE HAWK ETERNAL (hb 15 99) Second Book of The Hawk Queen, which is excellent and simultaneously issued the first volume IRONHAND'S DAUGHTER in paperback (4 99) which is also highly recommended. Along with these, we have THE COMPLETE CHRONICLES OF THE JERUSALEM MAN (hb 15 99 trade pb 9 99) a gathering of the three novels featuring his popular character Jon Shannow WOLF IN SHADOW THE LAST GUARDIAN and BLOODSTONE The author has written new introductions to each

Now we'll try to sop up some of the flow of publications that gushed in while this column took its sabbatical On ALSO RECEIVED listing begins with an interesting non fiction title from BLANDFORD Paul Elliott's WARRIOR CULTS (hb 16 99 illustrated) is A History of Magical Mystical and Murderous Organisations Taking the mystery cults of Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire as its starting point the book works through the Knights Templar and Hassan i Sabbah's Assassins, to Thugs Ninjas and Boxers It's Buddy written with an authoritative tone that speaks of thorough research

HAVE BROLLY WILL TRAVEL!

BOXTREE continues to stoke its claim as the leading publisher of film and TV tie ins THE ULTIMATE AVENGERS (trade pb 16 99) is an excellent one source reference that will intrigue even those with only a casual interest in the classic show Author Dave Rogers exhaustively chronicles all 161 episodes of THE AVENGERS original six seasons and the 25 episodes of THE NEW AVENGERS Interviews with the stars and production staff and a comprehensive guide to the merchandising and spin offs along with a good selection of illustrations justify the book's title. Rogers coverage gives the word scriptorious a new meaning and goes some way to excusing a rather stuff cover price Edward Gross and Mark A Altman's CREATING THE NEXT GENERATION (pb 9 99) follows meticulously the genesis and execution of the STAR TREK sequel STAR WARS – THE SCRIPTS (pb 14 99) will hold particular fascination not only for the hardcore fans but anyone with an interest in the film making process A colour section reproducing various posters for the trilogy adds a nice bonus And Andy Mangels provides a useful companion volume in STAR WARS – THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CHARACTERS (pb 14 99) In addition to the films it covers the books comics games and TV specials and there are pictures to accompany most of the entries

CREATION BOOKS INSIDE TERADOME (trade pb 11 95) is An Illustrated History of Freak Film edited and compiled by Jack

Hunter Jack Sargeant's DEATHTRIPPING The Cinema of Transgression (trade pb 11 95) is an equally adult overview of underground and trash cinema probably the first in depth survey of this particular corner of dark culture And David Karekes and David Slater's KILLING FOR CULTURE – An Illustrated History of Death Film from Mondo to Snuff which we reviewed last year is out again in a revised updated edition (trade pb 12 95)

GOLLANCZ presents a first novel from David Calloway a film and TV screen writer FORTRESS MANHATTAN (pb 5 99) extrapolates the current American trend of highly protected communities for the super-rich into a grim cyberpunkish future An sf thriller with good pace it's a promising debut We enjoyed Simon R. Green's DEATHSTALKER last year and now we have his HELLWORLD (pb 4 99) the third volume of the Twilight of Empire series Captain Scott Hunter and his Hell Squad crashland on inhospitable Wolf IV where they have to battle indigenous life form to make the planet habitable for human colonists Green is becoming adept at action driven sf adventure yarns On the horror front Peter James's ALCHEMIST (hb 15 99) his seventh novel again exploits techno fear and corporate paranoia Nobel laureate Dr Richard Bannerman is employed as a genetic researcher by multinational pharmaceutical company Bendix Schere Bannerman's daughter Montana is initially delighted less so when she learns of a series of horrific deaths connected to Bendix Schere's bestselling fertility drug Maternox More mayhem dogs her investigation

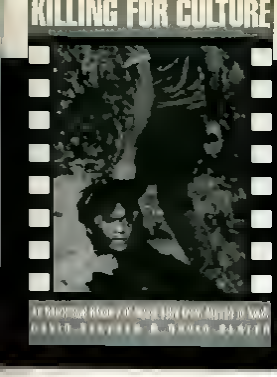
X MARKS THE SPOT!

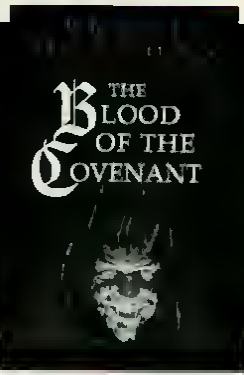
It seems that anything bearing the magic title X Files at the moment is assured of commercial success (Take a look at the bestseller lists) HARPER COLLINS offering for the X Files is Brian Lowry's THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO THE X FILES (trade pb 9 99) It has an episode guide to the first three seasons character biogs and lots of background material, illustrated throughout Also from Harper Collins comes Jonathan Aycliffe's latest spine-chiller THE MATRIX (trade pb 6 99) A Faustian yarn of a grieving scientist who gets seduced by dark magic the novel further demonstrates Aycliffe's determination to keep the traditional ghost story alive INCARNATIONS (hb 15 99) usefully collects together the scripts of three

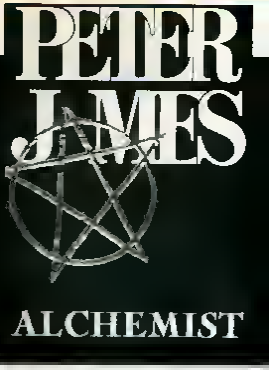
Clive Barker plays Colossus Frankenstein in Love and The History of the Devil They confirm that Barker's talents aren't confined to the prose for which he is most famous Mark Morris is an author who has been favourably likened to Barker His fourth novel, THE SECRET OF ANATOMY (pb 5 99) starts with the intriguing device of protagonist David Fox finding a message in a bottle while walking a beach The plea for help it contains entangles him with a sinister secret society

HC's sf/fantasy imprint VOYAGER brings us MAGIC, The Final Fantasy Collection by the late Isaac Asimov (hb 15 99) The short stories here dispel the notion that Asimov's output was exclusively science fiction he was not adverse to having some fun with less rational concepts from time to time David Bischoff turns in two

PRINTS OF DARKNESS







very competent novelisations of Gerry Anderson s SPACE PRECINCT series – ALIEN ISLAND and DEMON WING (pb 4 99 each) And Terry Bisson has done a solid adaptation of William Gibson s screenplay for the disappointing film version of JOHNNY MNEMONIC (pb 4 99) Three substantial fantasies round off the Voyager selection C J Cherryh s FORTRESS IN THE EYE OF TIME (pb 5 99) Mercedes Lackey's THE EAGLE AND THE NIGHTINGALES (pb, 4 99) and Jane Welsh s THE RUNES OF WAR, Book One of The Runespell Trilogy (pb 5 99)

HEADPRESS one of the more enterprising not to say controversial independent publishers, brings us CRITICAL VISION – Random Essays & Tracts Concerning Sex Religion, Death (trade pb 11 95) edited by the above mentioned David Kerekes and David Slater The section I found of most interest were Kerekes survey of erotic comic books, and his history of beleaguered Manchester publishers Savoy Slater s Sadean view of Mr Punch, and Chris Mikul s look at the Children of God cult An eclectic bizarre and occasionally disturbing non fiction anthology that contains some strong adult material

Back to more conventional pastures with HODDER HEADLINE A title of interest from its CORONET imprint is RULERS OF DARKNESS (pb 5 99) American author Steven Spruill s fourth horror outing It s another modern vampire story but it drops the traditional supernatural trappings

Here the vampires who dub themselves haemophages are humans with a rare recessive gene that forces them to drink blood The principal villain is in some respects no villain at all, he tries to prey only on less deserving victims like criminals. The plot is police procedural in structure

CAMPBELL'S CONDENSED

HEADLINE has a paperback edition of Ramsey Campbell's excellent possession novel THE INFLUENCE (5 99) originally published in 1988 (Curiously the prelim page copyrights an author s introduction that doesn t appear in the book...) The teenager In Philip Caveney s BURN DOWN EASY (pb 16 99) is obsessed by fire and they have a tendency to break out wherever he goes Richard Laymon s BODY RIDES (hb 16 99) is built around a bracelet that allows its wearer to inhabit other peoples bodies a nasty serial killer features

A workmanlike horror thriller from an ever reliable author HODDER presents DARK LOVE (trade pb 9 99) an anthology edited by Nancy A Collins, Edward E. Kramer and Martin H Greenberg. The twenty two original stories of lust obsession and dark fantasy include contributions from Stephan King Basil Copper John Shirley Ramsey Campbell and Douglas E Winter Brent Monahan s THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT (hb 16 99) is a further Novel of the Vampiric a follow up to THE BOOK OF COMMON DREAD

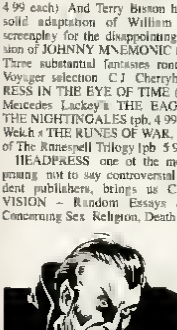
Two handsomely produced volumes have appeared from PAPER TIGER. HARD CURVES – The Fantasy Art of Julie Bell (pb 12 95) is a comprehensive selection of mostly portrait art heavy on air brush and glossy finish ALIEN HORIZONS – The Fantastic Art of Bob Eggleton (pb 12 95) is more varied and generally better accomplished

Last year s TALES FROM THE MOS EISLEY CANTINA edited by Kevin J Anderson was an ingenious STAR WARS anthology spin off Now TRANSWORLD s BANTAM BOOKS has struck again and published Anderson s TALES FROM JABBA S PALACE (pb, 4 99) another imaginative addition to the SW universe It s a consistently fine selection with contributions from Barbara Hambly Kathy Tyers Timothy Zahn George Alec Effinger Dave Wolverton and Anderson himself among others Like CANTINA JABBA'S PALACE is accessible to a general of readership not just the hardcore Vonda McIntyre s THE CRYSTAL STAR (pb 5 99) a STAR WARS novel likewise stands on its own merits

Finally VIRGIN has an extremely comprehensive and lavishly produced STAR WARS reference in Mark Cotta Vaz and Shinji Hata s THE STAR WARS ARCHIVES (hb 19 99)

It features props costumes models and artwork from the trilogy and the Indiana Jones archives are thrown in for good measure

The book probably has little appeal outside dedicated enthusiasts but it s very nicely done ☐



PRINTS OF DARKNESS

CHOICE CUTS

Brad Stevens dallies with some topless tavern wenches and checks out the fully uncut Redemption reissue of WITCHFINDER GENERAL!

Michael Reeves' WITCHFINDER GENERAL (or to use the actual screen title, MATTHEW HOPKINS – WITCHFINDER GENERAL) has come to be regarded as one of the undisputed classics of British cinema. I must admit that while I always found the film very impressive, I also thought it [illegible] overrated, unable to sustain some of the claims made by its more ardent admirers.

Recently, however, I had the pleasure of seeing Redemption's fully restored tape and completely withdrew all previous reservations. It is, of course, impossible to say whether my changed perspective is directly attributable to the new footage or because, at 28 years of age, I have finally attained sufficient maturity to appreciate the complex vision of this 24 year old director. Perhaps it is simply the result of at long last being able to watch the film intelligently, without having to wonder if what I was seeing corresponded with the artist's intentions, or being distracted by the glaringly obvious trims made to key moments.

WITCHFINDER is carefully structured in terms of the opposition between Vincent Price's depraved Matthew Hopkins and Ogilvy's Richard Marshall, both are introduced on horseback (Marshall riding right to left, Hopkins left to right), both are only make their silver by killing, good Christians' but promoted for their actions, Marshall becoming a Captain while Hopkins is declared 'Witchfinder General' (there are those who think that I should be appointed such for all of England!) and Marshall in fulfilling his obsessive quest for revenge is finally degraded to the level of Hopkins himself (more so, being implied from the outset is the pleasure he takes from killing the Royalist soldier).

This mirroring is carried through into Reeves' portrayal of Cromwellian England. Consider the pre-credits sequence in which the decent citizens of a small village drag an evil witch to the gallows and execute her, then gradually disperse with obvious disgust as the full implications of their actions sink in (one might legitimately compare this with the reaction of the servants who assist at the blinding of Gloucester in KING LEAR). Clearly Reeves believes violence to be a fundamental part of the human psyche, as indicated by the shots of children excitedly watching the burning of Elizabeth Clark and later baking potatoes in the remains of the fire.

This kind of image is usually associated with Sam Peckinpah (there are a number of examples in STRAW DOGS, the 1971 film that marked the beginning of Peckinpah's association with WITCHFINDER's director of photography John Coquillon) but actually makes its first appearance in THE WILD BUNCH, which was released in 1969, a year after WITCHFINDER GENERAL. Don Siegel also used children in this way (see, for instance, the opening shots of THE KILLERS) and it's fascinating to discover that both Reeves and Peckinpah began their careers in the same way – as dialogue directors for Siegel.

> **"Redemption have replaced four of the tavern scenes with different takes filmed by Reeves especially for the European release, showing Hopkins' associate Stearne surrounded by topless women..."**

PRICE TO BE PAID

Reeves seems to have had a problematic relationship with Vincent Price, flinching to the famous 'I've made 87 films. What have you done?' 'I've made 3 good ones' exchange). They got off to a bad start as a result of Reeves being unable to use his preferred actor Donald Pleasance, though Price is excellent in the role. Otherwise the director worked in conditions of complete artistic freedom. Sadly the film's subsequent history is marked by interference and compromise.

The problems began when Reeves cut was submitted to censor John [illegible] It is [illegible] me in Cecil B. Trevelyan who felt obliged to make extensive cuts. For its American release, the film was retitled THE CONQUEROR WORM in order to make it appear part of Roger Corman's popular Poe series (I believe that Vincent Price reading Poe's poem of the same name was added to the opening sequence).

Worse was to come, however for copyright problems have led to the American release being [illegible] eliminating Paul Ferris' score and replacing it with a newly composed, strangely inappropriate, synthesiser soundtrack by Kendall Schmidt. Intriguingly, some reports suggest that Ferris' score was not actually composed for the film, being library music recorded by the DeWolfe collection (the same source that supplied the supermarket muzak in DAWN OF THE DEAD and presumably Ferris' soundtrack for Reeves' THE SORCERERS) thus explaining why portions of it keep turning up in commercials on both sides of the Atlantic.

(Ed's note: Paul Ferris was a friend of Reeves who also acts in the movie. He's the guy who gets shot on the stairs and expires in a welter of blood after revealing Hopkins' whereabouts to Marshall. He's listed in the credits as "Morris Jay.")

Michael Reeves

a gag that will appeal to film music buffs. I actually interviewed Ferrin some time back and he told me he *did* compose the score specifically for the film. Reeves asked for a *Greensleeves*-type melody and certainly got it. DeWolfe purchased it for use as library music in the mid 70s and it has since turned up in TV commercials and shows like *Minder*!)

The various U K video releases and television screenings on ITV and BBC2 have all been of the butchered British cinema release print (though John Martin informs me that a longer if still incomplete version turned up on certain ITV regions in the late 80s while *Movie Collector*'s Trevor Willsmer recalls that the silent 7 minute reel released on 8mm included some of the censored footage) so the arrival of Redemption's restoration (now passed unmolested by the BBFC) is especially welcome.

CUTS RESTORED!

Redemption's video consists of a U K print to which the previously censored shots taken from a European copy have been added. The print is unfortunately slightly worn, particularly at reel ends (the start of reel 2 in which Marshall bids farewell to Sara and her uncle cuts the word 'goodbye' from the soundtrack) but is basically acceptable, and while the restored sections are of slightly differing quality the effect is not too distracting.

More controversially Redemption have replaced four of the tavern scenes with different takes filmed by Reeves especially for the European release showing Hopkins associates Stearne surrounded by topless women (the action in the previously available version is identical but the women are either fully clothed or not present at all). This material was not removed from the original by the censors since it was never submitted to them. If it had been, it is difficult to imagine that this soft core nudity would have posed any problems so it seems likely that Reeves actually preferred the clothed takes. The rarity of this alternative footage unquestionably makes Redemption's decision to use it is the right one, but collectors may like to hang on to their recordings of the cut version in order to preserve both variants (incidentally the English dialogue for these sequences on Redemption's tape does not always match up neatly with the lip movements).

Redemption's restoration is slightly almost imperceptibly masked as I 66 1 said runs 86 minutes (82 minutes 28 seconds at 25 fps). It contains the following material not present in the cut version (running 85 minutes or 81 minutes 20 seconds at 25 fps).

1– 2 minutes in The scene in which Stearne begins to drive a spike into the priest's back lasts 4 seconds longer. Additionally after the shot of Sara at the lake there is a single extra shot of the priest being tortured.

2– 24 minutes in The first tavern scene in which Hopkins sneaks out to visit Sara while Stearne boasts to his drinking companions contains alternate takes featuring nudity.

3– 26 minutes in After Hopkins seduces Sara in her room the following scene in which he finds Stearne unconscious in the tavern features more alternate take nudity (Stearne is now discovered with his hand on a woman's breast). During the discussion about whether or not Stearne is fit to continue interrogating witches (I'm fighting fit as it is) a naked woman can be seen behind him unfortunately the final shot of this sequence is taken from the U K print (presumably in order to incorporate a dissolve into the next scene) making the woman mysteriously appear to have dressed in a couple of seconds the only real evidence of witchcraft in the entire film)

> **"The BBFC believes that the sight of blood on breasts is a 'trigger' for rapists..."**

4– 28 minutes in. The next tavern scene in which Stearne leaves to follow Hopkins to Sara's house includes alternate nude takes.

5– 31 minutes in The sequence in which Stearne tortures a woman in a cell has gained some important footage there is a new shot of Stearne strangling and slapping the woman. the shot of Stearne looking up after being told that Hopkins is coming has been extended by a single slap after Hopkins arrives a glimpse of the woman in the cell has been added along with the line "I trust you are using the prescribed methods Stearne (the crude cutting of the older version turned this into the meaningless "I trust Stearne") and the shot of Stearne re-entering the cell and continuing his (offscreen) interrogation now includes the sound of screaming and slapping.

6– 35 minutes in The tavern scene (actually a single shot) in which Hopkins tells Stearne that he has changed his mind about keeping the priest in the cell is an alternate take a topless woman (completely absent from the previous version) can now be seen behind Stearne.

7– 38 minutes in The shot of Stearne preparing the suspected witches for ducking is slightly longer including a glimpse of the priest having his feet tied. The shot of him being picked up and carried onto the bridge is also slightly extended while the following ducking contains 3 additional shots of Hopkins watching as the women struggle in the water.

8– 67 minutes in The burning of Elizabeth Clark at Lavenham has gained some vital material enabling the scene to play much more smoothly the shot of Elizabeth being dragged to the gibbet is a few seconds longer two shots of her being tied down have been added and a third (the only one left in the cut version) has been extended from one to three seconds and the sequence in which she is lowered into the flames includes 19 seconds of restored footage.

9– 77 minutes in. A number of individual shots totalling 9 seconds have been added to the scene in which Stearne tortures Sara with a spike (though the screams that accompany these shots have obviously been patched in from the surrounding soundtrack)

10–30 minutes in. The sequence in which Marshall attacks Hopkins with an axe has been extended by four seconds. The cutting of this material from the previous edition provided an unfortunate hiccough at the film's most powerful moment.

All in all then Redemption's tape is unreservedly recommended (indeed the only excuse you could possibly have for not rushing out to buy one immediately is that you've already done so

MINE'S A DOUBLE!

I recently compared RCA Columbia's UK tape of Brian De Palma's BODY DOUBLE (1984) with an ancient Australian video and discovered that the British edition had been slightly censored in two places. The very last shot of the film, which involves blood running over a woman's breast, was shortened from 8 to 4 seconds by means of an early fade to black (the credits playing over this shot remained fully visible however). The BBFC believes that the sight of blood on breasts is a 'trigger' for rapists (it certainly seems to have had some effect on Patrick Bateman the insane protagonist of Brett Easton Ellis' AMERICAN PSYCHO who claims to have watched the film 37 times though he appears to be more interested in the drill scene) so this cut is consistent with their policy – mind-boggingly stupid but consistent with their policy.

Alongside this example of what our moral guardians believe we should not be allowed to see is an example of what they think we should not be allowed to hear for incredible as it may seem the other cut consists of nothing more than a 5 second passage of dialogue. It occurs 79 minutes in during the scene in which Melanie Griffith lists the things that she will not do in porn films and is as follows "I will not shave my pussy. No fist fucking. Absolutely no coming in my face."

Good grief! I know that we easily influenced Brits can't possibly be allowed to watch such things, but why on earth should the mere mention of them be removed from a tape passed as suitable only for over-18s? Answers on a postcard to James Ferman at the usual address.

CHANGE THAT TUNE!

Another De Palma film that is somewhat less than it should be on tape is WISE GUYS (1986) an uncharacteristic- occasionally funny vehicle for Danny De Vito and Joe Piscopo. Copyright problems with the U.K. video (there was no British cinema release) led to the removal of Bruce Springsteen's song 'Pink Cadillac' from the soundtrack of the sequence in which De Vito and Piscopo drive to Atlantic City, treshing Frankie The Fixer's prized Cadillac en route (the scene now plays without any music). Clearly Springsteen fell little gratitude to De Palma for directing his 'Dancing In The Dark' video two years earlier. 'Pink Cadillac' can still be heard in the version of the film shown twice by the BBC but that deletes all of the swearing making it an even less satisfying experience. Quick, nurse the audio dub!

De Palma's OBSESSION screenwriter Paul Schrader obviously encountered a similar problem with his 1982 remake of CAT PEOPLE, since every video and laserdisc release of this title, both here and in America, features two instances of re-recorded music. The first appears 9 minutes in during the gumbo dinner. In the original this scene is accompanied by Perry Como singing 'Faraway Places' while the home viewing versions substitute 'Sunday Kind of Love' by Ella Fitzgerald (which is actually an aesthetic improvement). The end credits have been altered accordingly.

The second change can be found 41 minutes in, during the scene in which Ed Begley sings to a caged tiger (just before it expresses its appreciation of his vocal skills by tearing his arm off). In the original Begley's song of choice is 'What a New Pussycat?' but the videos make use of an alternate take (presumably shot by Schrader in case copyright problems arose) in which Begley can be heard singing 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight'. Neither of these tunes is mentioned in the end credits of any print. Happily different copyright laws come into force when a film is broadcast on television, which explains why the transfer shown recently on Sky Movies Gold was taken from the original cinema version.

SATELLITE FINDS!

Readers may not realise that 'Choice Cuts' has to be completed several decades before the magazine's publication date (as I write O.J. Simpson is attracting intense opprobrium for his dire performance in CAPRICORN ONE) so it's inevitable that by the time certain items appear in print, subsequent events will have rendered them redundant. Last issue–for instance I insisted that Bravo make Max Fleischer's excellent SUPERMAN cartoons part of their announced (as opposed to unannounced) schedule. One can only surmise that an advance copy of that column was leaked to Bravo as selections of these classics were immediately dotted around the channel's listings under the title 'THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN'.

Since my word would appear to be Bravo's command I'd just like to say that it would be nice to see all 110 episodes of Blake Edwards' PETER GUNN, Sam Peckinpah's reportedly remarkable TV series THE WESTERNER (or any of Peckinpah's other television work), Jack Nicholson's DRIVE, HE SAID, Dalton Trumbo's JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN (a superb surreal war film unseen in the U.K. since its single BBC screening in 1980), Monte Hellman's IGUANA, Michael Reeves' THE SHE-BEAST (aka REVENGE OF THE BLOOD BEAST), Arthur Penn's MICKEY ONE, Nicholas Ray's THE LUSTY MEN, Ralph Bakshi's COONSKIN etc.

Bravo is one of the channels with a habit of screening films in letterbox format without any prior warning, notably BREAKING GLASS, SHOUT AT THE DEVIL and DEMETRIUS AND THE GLADIATORS (the rights to which have since been acquired by Sky, whose motto would appear to be 'no turning back but plenty of panning-and-scanning from side to side.')

TNT are unquestionably the leaders of this particular pack since their collection of 2.35:1 widescreen masters now encompasses over a dozen titles with new ones being added virtually every week including BRAINSTORM, HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT, THE ADVENTURES OF QUENTIN DURWARD, 36 HOURS, PLEASE DON'T EAT THE DAISIES, THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY, THE HAUNTING, IT'S ALWAYS FAIR WEATHER, DOCTOR ZHIVAGO, MOONFLEET, WILD ROVERS, WEST WORLD and 2010 (films made in the anamorphic 1.85:1 ratio such as GET CARTER and TELEFON are also mildly letterboxed).

Incidentally did anyone catch Channel 4's recent screenings of THE HOT ROCK and THE LAST EMPEROR? *Radio Times* promised that both of these films would be showing in widescreen format but they turned out to be the same old pan-and-scan versions screened previously. Channel 4's press office promised to contact me with an explanation, but never bothered. Hey at least they're consistent. □

"Silents is gothic," says Allan Bryce, particularly if they are as brilliantly made as the 1927 German sci-fi spectacular, METROPOLIS. Here's the background on a genuine movie masterpiece!

DARK SIDE CLASSIC: METROPOLIS

L

[illegible] mighty

[illegible] KRIEMHILD'S

[illegible] children were part. The [illegible] children were [illegible] 98 [illegible] the [illegible] movie The Sh[illegible] [illegible] R

THE WORKERS ARE REVOLTING!

[illegible] 1000 [illegible] children [illegible] wh[illegible] [illegible] applied [illegible] wa[illegible] class [illegible] Metro[illegible]

imploring them to reject [illegible] to improve their lot and to [illegible] of love and the saviour who [illegible] nurse in the form of a mediator.

But even this minor act of defiance is too much for Abel, who has observed the speech in the company of Rotwang (brilliantly played by Rudolf Klein Rogge) his mad scientist hireling. Given the green light to do his worst, Klein Rogge abducts Helm, creates a robot in her image and programs it to return and lead the workers in a revolt.

Then follows some truly spectacular footage in which the lower city is flooded as a means of making the subhuman populace who dwell there forever subservient. Frolich, however, rescues the real Maria and together they manage to save the children. Then, fearing that his own son may have been killed in the madness, Abel sur[illegible] that Hella was right, and that love is the most important of human emotions.

The picture ends with Klein Rogge's death and the capitalist shaking the hand of the representative of labour. The story has many illogical flaws, seem a bit silly, but this is virtuoso work of art and the narrative is really only an excuse for Lang to overwhelm us with his masses of humanity forming [illegible] geometric patterns, his expressionistic moods and his art nouveau and futuristic creations which leave the viewer astonished. And in all of these, of course, are added enough pure melodramatic thrills to satisfy any devotee of the Saturday afternoon western or for that matter the serial genre.

HITLER'S OFFER

In the early thirties Lang was summoned by one Dr Joseph Goebbels (the propagandist who seen METROPOLIS with Adolf Hitler when it was first released) and was offered the position of head of the entire German film industry. The director told Dr Nazi that he was [illegible] boys in words. In fact, Then he took his leave, packed everything of value he could find, [illegible] wife, [illegible] remained [illegible] and [illegible] gone.

Critics of the time (and later historians) widely condemned the picture because of its socio-political content. Even H G Wells (no slouch at futuristic themes himself) was offended by the message he saw in the film

> **"Adolf Hitler offered Lang the position of head of the entire German film industry. The director said he was "tickled pink," honoured beyond words, in fact. Then he took his leave, packed everything of value he could find, and grabbed a plane for Paris..."**

[illegible] suggestion that the differences between capital and labour could be resolved through charity (the hand and the head need the heart as mediator). Lang himself escaped most such cynicism; people were eager to place the blame for the picture's message on von Harbou, whose equally sentimental novelisation was published after the film's release. Perhaps the picture appeared in the wrong temporal context; its socio-political content would have seemed relevant to the Luddites of the early 19th century who had smashed the machines that displaced their labour in the English textile mills; machines that condemned them to the slavery of endless toil but to that of poverty and purposeless [illegible]

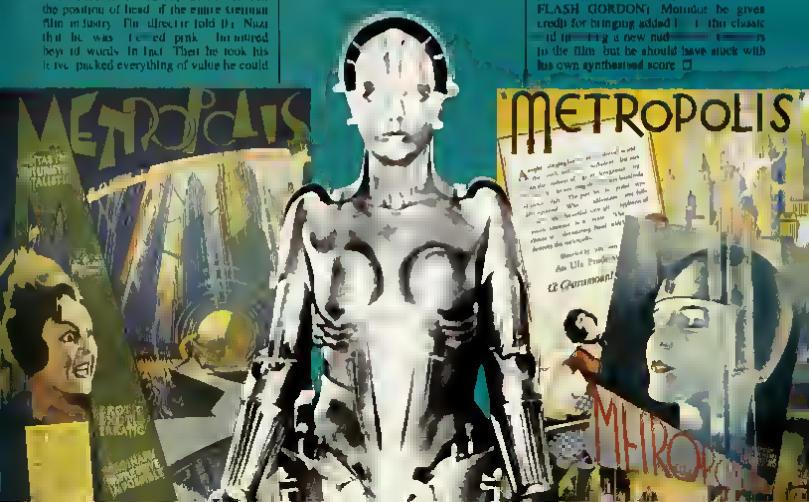
[illegible] would the message have seemed so [illegible] at a time when the governments of great nations deliberately avoided [illegible] some industries in order to give their people useful work to do? Liverpool [illegible] India had an oil refinery re-designed after partitioning it from the U.S. the refinery had not required enough human hands [illegible] operations. Endless toil was not the problem in Depression ridden Germany during the 1920s, finding sustaining at which to toil was the problem.

METROPOLIS two years in the making, did its part to help Lang hired 1000 unemployed men who were willing to have their heads shaved for the tower of Babel scene, and wanted to hire 5 000 more (this striking segment like the rest of the film

> **"Even H. G. Wells (no slouch at futuristic themes himself) was offended by the message he saw in the film that machines might make slaves of people..."**

was shot at the aptly named Neubabelsberg studio of UFA).

The monumental picture no longer exists in its original 17 reel form, even on its initial English release it was severely edited, while sub-plots being excised for fear of censorship. In 1984 Giorgio Moroder re-released METROPOLIS with new footage, new title cards and a repetitive rock score (Pat Benatar, Loverboy and Queen, the latter of which also ruined the 1980 version of FLASH GORDON). Moroder he gives credit for bringing added [illegible] this classic [illegible] a new audience to the film, but he should leave alone with his own synthesised score. □



The Darkside
The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

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VIDEO VAULT

The Dark Side is the video world's guide, the best buy guide — the good, the bad, the ugly

Key to the ratings:
★★★★ = excellent
★★★ = good
★★ = mediocre
★ = poor

CASPER

CIC Video
Christiana Ricci, Bill Pullman, Cathy Moriarty
Certificate: PG
Running Time: 100 mins

★★★★

HALLOWEEN (Widescreen)

Missing in Action
Donald Pleasence, Jamie Lee Curtis, Charles Cyphers
Certificate: 18
Running time: 89 mins

★★★★

[illegible]

BODYPUZZLE

BODYPUZZLE
A Taste Of Fear
Joanna Pacula, Tomas Arana, Francois Montagut, Giovanni Lombardo Radice
Certificate: 18
Running time: 94 mins

★★★

Finally available in British (unsurprisingly unrated!) Bava Jr's excellent giallo received short shrift in its native country, being swiftly pulled from release heavily cut to the equivalent of an unbelievable PG certificate and retitled MYSTERIA. Thus such a superb example of the form should be so shunned in the very country that invented the genre is a very sad illustration of the poor health of the Italian film business. Despite a couple of script inconsistencies and a bungled climatic hospital scene, BODYPUZZLE is the best horror/thriller to come out of Italy in years.

The title refers to the hideous jigsaw of parts being hacked from seemingly innocent victims by a stocking masked maniac.

There's a pre-credits sequence of a motorcyclist coming to grief on a rain-soaked road (having seemingly being chased by a speeding car driver).

Then we meet Tracy (Joanna Pacula) who is increasingly alarmed about the killings, and with good reason.

Not only are the body parts starting to turn up in her fridge but the remains of her recently deceased husband, Abe, have been stolen from his grave.

It is Abe whose organs those are, being plucked from the people who received them after his death. Somebody is trying to put Abe back together again – bit by bit (indeed the original English shooting title was PIECES OF ABE).

Permanently tired-looking Detective Mike Levitt investigates the seemingly impenetrable case and discovers that Abe had a secret life hidden from Tracy and which seems to be the motive for the mutilations.

Meanwhile the killings get nastier and nastier including a night marish attack in a women's lavatory in a department store and a truly hideous one in a school for blind children where the teacher has received Abe's cornea. Bruce Martin's screenplay has a couple more clever twists even if Arana and Pacula's romance seems a little well rapid.

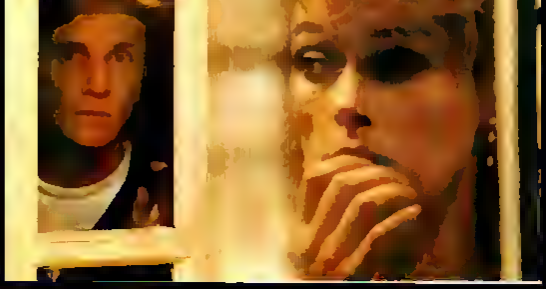
Arana is effectively dogged as detective Levitt and it makes you wonder why his Hollywood chosen THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER and the original production of RADIO PLAYER, re-cast after the original director was fired – seems to have stalled. Notable support comes from genre vets Gianni Garko and Erika Blanc with Giovanni Lombardo Radice (the much slapped John Morgan of Italian gores Class of the 40's) giving a remarkably eye-catching turn as the arrogantly sleazy Meranzi, a character from Abe's past.

Finally back with problems, BODYPUZZLE also received grief from the sound if composer Carl Orff's 'Carmina Burana' to be in the public domain. Bava used it in the original version as the music the murderer plays on his Walkman as he kills. The Orff estate threatened to sue and Bava was forced to strip off the original soundtrack and replace it with the well-known Night On Bare Mountain.

Having seen both versions, one realises that certain scenes are obviously edited to the rhythm of the Orff piece, but the substitution works just as well.

Shot in direct-sound English, the technical level is as excellent as you would expect, with fine photography from Argento-collaborator Luigi Kuveiller and clever art direction from Davide Bassan. Bava Jr. may never quite shake off the mantle of his illustrious father but on the evidence of this and his TV work in the HIGH TENSION series for Reteitalia he has more than made up for early disappointments such as GRAVEYARD DISTURBANCE.

Watch this and see an example of Italian giallo film-making as it used to be.



WATERWORLD

CIC Video

Kevin Coetner, Dennis Hopper, Jeanne Tripplehorn

Certificate *12*

Running time *135 mins*

★★★½

A well founded rumour has it that WATERWORLD was initially offered as a script to Roger Corman's Concorde Pictures. Corman was understandably cautious. This film would go way out of control he is reported as saying it could cost as much as five million dollars.

Then in an way was WATERWORLD going to get a fair press after the spiralling budget went turbo. The reasons for this are many and varied as explained in the business pages of the heavier newspapers but it has emerged that Universal were happy for this to happen in order to make the studio a Japanese owners finally give up their Hollywood aspirations and sell Universal to the American company Seagram.

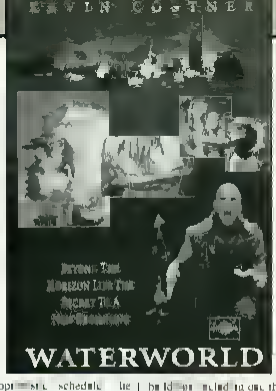
So forget the budget, the marriage break up, the sinking sets, the ludicrously optimistic schedule. Kevin Costner/Reynolds hunt up, you another one and run entrance on the film, an absolutely stunning fast moving inventive and genuinely exciting sci fi epic.

The premise after a very loose adaptation of the global Universal logo into a landless water covered world is simple. The only survivors are those who have adapted to life on the waves, and The Mariner (Costner) is very much one of these having modified his catamaran with all sorts of survival equipment, weaponry and filtration gear. Any film that starts with the hero drinking his own purified urine can't going to lack for ideas.

Enemies are everywhere in this new world as soon early on when Costner abandons a thieving fellow seafarer to a violent fate. After enter ng a floating dry dock for the purposes of trade and nearly being put to death by the almost scaly skin occupiers when they discover the fish like girls behind his oars, The Mariner is saved when the floating hulk is attacked by a band of grungy pirates on jet foils. The Smokers perhaps named not so much because of the exhaust of their outboards as for the fact that they constantly have a Marlboro on the go.

A surprising aspect is the violence of the Smokers attacks. Arrows harpoons blades and even jet bikes all cleave into people and there is a viciousness in these scenes which isn't expected. After an extremely violent and expensively staged battle during which he half blinds the Smoker's leader the Mariner escapes with a woman, Helen (Jeanne Tripplehorn) and a child, Enola (Tina Majorino) who has a strange pictogramic tattoo on her back which may possibly be the key to the discovery of the legendary last terra firma, Dryland.

Technically it is remarkable as it should be for what's the latest guesstimate's $170 million plus, apart from some very dodgy blue screen work at the end which just appears to have been rushed and not properly colour balanced. The most remarkable sequence has Costner taking Tripplehorn and the child to show her the remains of a city before the flooding. Swimming through streets of ruined

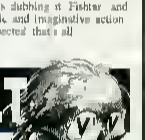


buildings including one that has lost a million submarine wedged into it, it gives a real feeling of the devastation that has befallen the Earth.

Costner retains his dignity as The Mariner and is a thoroughly ruthless character who you actually believe will kill the woman and girl if they interfere with his plans. Had the girl not carried the clue to Dryland in her back one guesses she wouldn't have been tolerated nearly as long. Hopper is clearly having a roaring time as the Smoker, a leader Deacon magically ing the sunken military but still with a very dangerous edge. The real kudos must go to the phalanx of stuntmen for the brilliant jet foil chases, crashes and general mayhem and real invention has been put into the excellently choreographed action sequences.

The video format is a hindrance to a production such as this which really deserves a big screen but forget the wage dubbing it Fishtar and Kevin's Gate. WATERWORLD is a fantastic and imaginative action adventure. It just cost a few more bob than expected, that's all.

VIDEO VAULT



VOODOO

First Independent

Corey Feldman
Sarah Douglas

Certificate *18*

Running Time *89 mins*

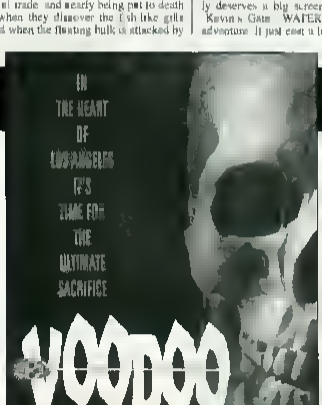
★★

When the word "voodoo" is mentioned in a film title it conjures up expectations of exotic thrillers set on the black magic island of Haiti.

But there's nothing particularly exotic about this cheerful little teen horror flick which is set in and around a Los Angeles college and features some of the cheapest effects we've seen in at least a month.

Corey Feldman stars as a new kid in town who is befriended by the charismatic president of the Omega Zeta Mu house and is taken to a clandestine club for his initiation.

But the night takes a sinister turn when he is drugged and taken to a secret place where he is sacrificed. The next morning he discovers an image of Erzulie the snake goddess tattooed on his chest and an old man appears at his bedside to warn him of the dark magic that is stirring in. Can he adapt voodoo magic himself to combat his oppressors?



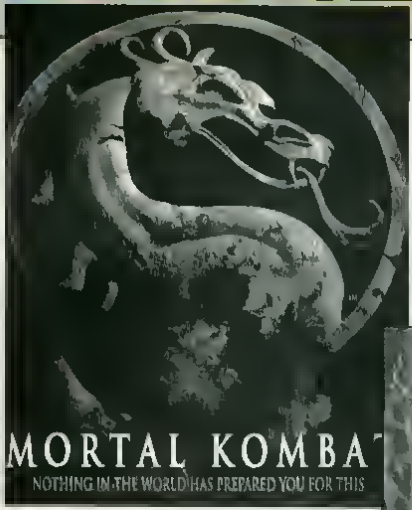
You betcha he can!

We're talking low budget potboiler here with lots of crap dialogue and daft plot twists. People get taken over by voodoo and act like zombies and there's lots of tomfoolery with little was dummies all of whom give a better performance than creepy Corey Feldman who seems a bit too old to be attending college and is so well odd nowadays that he should really have been sent to the baddie.

Corey has an off putting way of mumbling his dialogue, and is most unconvincing as a romantic lead. However it's encouraging to think that if he can make it in Hollywood then *anyone* probably can.

The film has one standout scene where the leader of the black magic cult demonstrates his power by waving one of the students to a fiery death with a gun and slaughter a roo mates. Apart from that, *Voodoo* is very low on genuine chills and spooky atmospheres and just sort of meanders along pleasantly enough in a predictable finale that even finds room for one of those oh so boring knee jerk shock dream [illegible]

Thrill starved horror fans might want to give it a passing glance but they won't find it the cast a spell over them.



MORTAL KOMBAT

First Independent

Christopher Lambert, Robin Shou, Linden Ashby,

Certificate 15

Running time 101 mins

★★★

The success of MORTAL KOMBAT can be attributed to one simple fact that the makers of other video-game to movie projects seemed to ignore If it's not broke don't fix it Instead of adding bare elements and characters from the original scenarios and transplanting them into hopelessly contrived situations such as in the case of both SUPER MARIO BROS and STREETFIGHTER, screenwriter Kevin Droney essentially transfers the game to the screen with just a little exposition The result is millions of dollars in the till and an extremely entertaining film to boot

Technical excellence some deftly stylish direction and a cast who play it admirably straight make MORTAL KOMBAT the sort of film that will have cinema purists decrying the death of the medium while the rest of us have a good time

Players of the game will know the situation The Earth is the prize in a battle between ultimate good and absolute evil and is fought for in a mystical challenge hang on that doesn't work challenge called Mortal Kombat Led by sorcerer Shang Tsung the baddies have won these contests [illegible] World Cup for very high stakes Rayden the enigmatic Lightning God chooses three mortals to represent humanity in the final confrontation — actor/martial artist Johnny Kage SWAT team member Sonya Blade and martial artist Liu Kang haunted by dreams of his brother dying at the hands of Shang Tsung

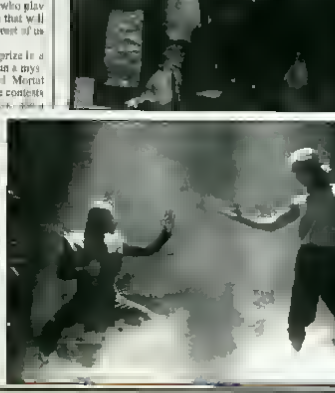
Transported by a mystical Viking style ship across the Outworld the tournament begins but one trio against the sorcerer's best fighters And that's the plot basically

For technical quality the movie is amazingly accomplished Set designs of the mystical world are all exceptional coupled with fine photography from John R Leonetti Director Anderson atones for the dreadful SHOPPING with pacey and vivid direction The overrated effects team of Alex Gillis and Tom Woodruff provide a convincing Goro an eight foot tall six armed beastie, even if the computer generated character is clearly employed more than their animatronic version

In all nearly a dozen effects houses are credited with the various opticals and digital composites Of the many digital fx only a recurring dog-creature which seems to fulfill no actual purpose is below standard George S Klinton's pounding score with the title track hammered home by the Utah Saints will definitely get the neighbours putting up in their beds if you bang it through your hi fi Nobody is going to win any acting awards for this but all are more than adequate in their parts Christopher Lambert makes for an amiable and authoritative Rayden Linden Ashby has some smart lines as the egotistical Johnny Kage and Brigitte Wilson looks good in an outrageously short dress Kory Hiroyuki-Tagawa is clearly having a fun time as Shang Tsung

The 15 rating is both severe and lenient The core audience of the game is probably 8 18 year olds, but the wincingly violent [illegible] bloodless action scenes are bone-crunching Spines get snapped, necks broken characters are kicked to kingdom come and one is shattered in mid air after being hit by an icy blast from renegade Ninja Sub-Zero Even more remarkable is a fight between Kage and Scorpion which occurs in a ghastly orange-hued underworld Game players will be gratified to know that Scorpion's special move is used here graphically

Distributors First Independent were offered 12 if they cut all blows to the head from the film which, wisely, they declined Yes it's a video game on film, but that's the whole point If you don't like the arcade game then you'll hate it Those who like it are the people this has been made for brilliantly I really enjoyed it but now I'm probably going wrk in the head



BRIANSTORM!

Chris Howarth interviews the prolific Hammer screenwriter (and sometime director), Brian Clemens...

The name of Brian Clemens is usually associated with classic British TV adventure programmes. Series like *The Avengers* (both old and new) *The Professionals* and the BBC's recent hit *Bugs*.

However his CV also contains a lengthy list of film credits beginning when he was a contract writer for the Danziger brothers and later taking in such diverse movies as *Mission To Morocco* *And Soon The Darkness*, *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* and Disney's *Watcher In the Woods*. He also penned the storyline (and an unused but superior version of the script) for *Highlander II*. And horror movie fans might be interested to learn that he wrote, uncredited, the final minutes of *The Abominable Dr Phibes* as a favour to his long time friend and business partner Albert Fenzel.

Clemens was also the brains behind two of the most imaginative and unique Hammer Film productions *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* and *Captain Kronos Vampire Hunter*. Clemens explains the genesis of the former in this way. When I was working on *The Avengers*, Hammer was right next door. I knew Michael and Jimmy Carreras quite well. They were making a lot of stuff

and I came up with an idea. *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde*. I couldn't believe nobody had ever done that.

He admits that that the idea more or less started out as a joke "I mentioned it to Jimmy and he said to come up and see him in two days at Hammer House. I went for the appointment and when I stepped out of the lift I could see that he had already had the poster made. So I knew I had a deal."

Clemens was commissioned to write and produce the film and set about the task immediately. "We cast Ralph Bates first because they said they'd like to use him. He'd already done a few Hammer films and I admired Ralph as an actor. I had no objection at all. And then we started to look for a girl who closely resembled him and came up with Martine Beswick."

Brian denies the oft stated rumour that Martine Beswick's casting as Sister Hyde was forced upon him. "I interviewed a lot of girls like Angela Grant, and Caroline Munro who I later used in *Kronos*. Oh all the girls who were around at the time. But Martine was obviously our first choice because she fitted the bill so well physically."

"But before we got to Martine we had to have all the girls come in and show their tits off which was quite pleasant. We didn't want her to wait until the day when we did it in the film and they went [Bonk] (he gesturesl towards the floor with both hands) We had to be assured of that. It was one of the best parts of making the movie," he smiles.

The film's director, Roy Ward Baker has gone on record as saying there should have been a confrontation scene between the two leads though Brian doesn't recall there being any such suggestion at the time that he should alter his script to include such a meeting. "I wrote the script. It was approved. The only changes were the changes that took place on the floor because find you haven't got the right chair or something the script was not changed at all. It was always conceived in that way I mean Roy Ward Baker brought his talents to it and certain emphases were changed. And of course once you get the actors working you find they can do some things well and some things badly so you emphasise their strengths and cut back on their weaknesses. But basically that was the script it didn't go to a second draft. There was a little more nudity in the first place but it was cut out because she [Martine Beswick] refused to do some of it."

RIPPER-ING YARNS!

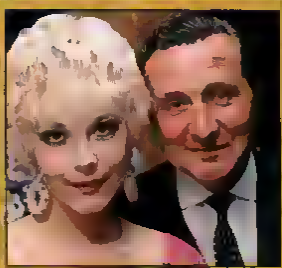
Explaining how the script developed from that original joke remark he says "I involved all the legends Jack the Ripper, Burke and Hare, and Jekyll and Hyde. It was quite good weaving them together. I'm sorry I didn't get Sherlock Holmes in there too really But he managed to make up for that omission a few years later "I did a play called *Holmes And The Ripper*. It was for the Sherlock Holmes centenary which also happened to be the centenary of Jack the Ripper. It toured for quite a while. Francis Matthews was Holmes and the guy from *Z-Cars* Frank Windsor was an excellent Watson."

The finished version of *Doctor Jekyll And Sister Hyde* was very much how Brian envisaged it, and he feels the whole production worked very well "Especially the transition," he says, "which we did for real. We went in on the mirror and then while we were in on Ralph in the mirror Martine took his place in a slightly different area. We came out at a slightly different place and they changed. It was quite cleverly done because Hammer wasn't known for big budgets and we didn't have a huge amount of special effects."

Brian enjoyed the experience of working for Hammer mainly because they didn't interfere and let him get on with it. "As long as you didn't go over budget they left you alone until first cut. They came in then and made comments." Consequently he was happy to work on a second project for them providing he was allowed to direct the film too. The idea he came up with this time was for a movie called *Captain Kronos Vampire Hunter*.

> **"On *Kronos*, Ian Hendry told me he'd lay off the booze. Then I went into the make-up room the next day, and at 7.30 in the morning he had a lager in his hand. I said 'I thought you were going to lay off!' He said, 'This isn't booze, this is lager...'"**

Why I came up with that idea is, they said 'We'd like a vampire movie from you.' I'm not a vampire fan but I ran all the Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing films and the thing that occurred to me was that the hero was really the vampire. He was the most interesting character and it was very predictable that Van Helsing would end up putting a stake through him and that would be that. So there was no tension in those films for me. So I created a whole new



vampire lore and a super hero – a bit like a Marvel comics hero really."

CASTING CAROLINE!

Although he was both producer and director of *Kronos*, Brian recalls: "I had a couple of young ladies forced upon me because certain people in Hammer were interested in furthering their careers. I can't remember their names; they were only small parts and I didn't mind. They were mainly victims of the vampires and these roles call for pretty girls with minimal acting experience. It's unfortunate that I didn't have the pleasure of the casting couch on that occasion."

He adds: "They did ask me to use Caroline Munro. I admire Caroline, she's a very nice person, a wonderful person. I'd written her part as a much more fiery gypsy type and as soon as I saw Caroline and spoke to her at great length I realised I wouldn't have to rewrite the scripts but I'd have to take a slightly different line in the same direction and go for what she did best, which was being soft and pleasant."

The casting of the film's male roles were left to Brian and he hired German actor Horst Janson to play the eponymous *Captain Kronos*, although he hadn't specifically required a European actor. "We had a lot of trouble casting it. We wanted somebody who looked good, and could act, which Horst can, was good on a horse and was good with a sword. And he had all those attributes. A lot of English actors had some, but none of them I found within our budget had all these accomplishments.

"He was re-voiced, you know by Julian Holloway. That was a command decision. I thought Horst played it rather well and his accent wasn't too intrusive, but the powers-that-be said, 'No, we want it re-dubbed.' They must have done it successfully because you didn't know did you? On the subject of actors I like, I used both the Johns Carter and Carson a great deal in the *Avengers* and other series. And then, of course, I used dear old Ian Hendry who was a great mate from the early *Avengers* and needed the work because he was a pisser artist.

It was only a three day part, but a very important part. I spoke to him and said: 'Ian you *will* be good won't you?' He said, 'I'll lay off the booze totally.' Then when I went into the make up room the next day at 7.30 in the morning, he had a lager in his

hand. I said 'I thought you were going to lay off!' He said, 'This isn't booze, this is lager.' But he was fine. He may have collapsed after I said 'Cut!', but he produced everything that was required of him, and gave a good performance."

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF KRONOS

It was intended at the time that there would be further adventures of *Captain Kronos*. "Usually, when I develop a television series I put forward the main pilot, as it were, and back it up with twenty stories of where it would go. Because people always ask me 'what would you do next?' I developed about five stories for *Kronos*, thinking he might take off as a Hammer character. And I think, properly exploited, he might well have done. The trouble is it came very near the end of Hammer's influence and near the end of what I call B movies really. They were all B movies basically – they used to go on as double bills and that doesn't happen anymore."

Brian provided only one-page outlines for the proposed *Kronos* stories and unfortunately it seems he no longer has copies of them. However he does recall some of the adventures he had in mind for his creation. "I deliberately called him Kronos, which is Greek for time, because he could've moved through time. You could've placed him almost anywhere really. He could've appeared in the 20th century. He was a pretty anachronistic hero because he smoked pot and meditated. He was very modern in that sense, so it would've been very easy to shift him in time."

But didn't Hammer's abortive attempts at updating Dracula deter Brian from considering a 20th-century adventure for *Kronos*? "No. I don't think the people who updated Dracula were very good at it. I think I would have been rather better at it actually. The Kronos stories weren't all going to be about vampires. They'd have been about inexplicable events, leaning towards the supernatural or legend. So it would have taken in other legendary figures, but dealing with them in a very different way as *Kronos* did with the vampire."

In 1976, the magazine *House Of Hammer* featured some new *Captain Kronos* comic strips in their first few issues. The writers were seemingly unaware of the directions in which Brian intended to take the series and simply based them on the vampire-hunter premise of the film. Brian admits he knew nothing of these strips and although they purported to be done with kind permission, he says "I don't think they were legally entitled to do them because I own *Kronos*. The publishers needn't worry however. I won't get into that now. It's too far in the past."

> "I had a couple of young ladies forced upon me because certain people in Hammer were interested in furthering their careers. They were mainly victims of the vampires and these roles call for pretty girls with minimal acting experience..."

TELEVISION TIMES

Sadly *Kronos* never returned for a second film adventure and we'll never know how he might have coped with the threat of werewolves, mummies and zombies, etc. "Although Kronos gets wonderful reviews in cult things nowadays," Brian says, "at the time it was given a very strange release. I often wondered if it was for tax purposes – so it was never really reviewed in this country. It was only reviewed in retrospect. It was hardly released and that's the end of the saga really."

It wasn't quite the end of the Hammer saga for Brian though. "Some years later, Roy Skeggs bought Hammer and started a series called *Hammer House Of Horror*. Because I knew Roy very well from when he was an accountant for the Hammer people, he invited me to write one episode and in the end I wrote two."

As a writer for hire on the television episodes, Brian had far less influence than he'd had on his previous Hammer jobs. "I just sent the scripts in and they made them. But if you're working for TV and not for yourself that's par for the course: they buy a script from you and then they ask for a second draft and once that's happened then, basically, you disappear from the scene. I mean, you can put in comments about casting and sometimes they're implemented and sometimes they're not."

Brian only got to see the episodes after they had been completed. "Peter Sasdy did one with Dena Stockwell. I thought the Sasdy one was very poor. It lost the atmosphere that was in the script. Finally you're in the hands of the director: he either sees it your way or he doesn't. The other episode *Mark of the Devil* was quite well realised. That was a good one actually about a man who was tattooed and the tattoo grew and took him over. I think that was probably the best of the batch." ❑

SATAN'S

The legendary exploitation filmmaker Al Adamson was recently found dead cemented into his own jacuzzi! David Flint has an alibi, but he still knows rather too much about Al's films to be totally blameless...

SADIST!

Exploitation movie veteran Al Adamson had been out of the spotlight for a number of years, but returned to the headlines in dramatic fashion in August 1995, when his body was discovered crammed into his whirlpool bath, at his home in Idaho. The alleged perpetrator of this foul deed was a disgruntled handyman not as young might think, as many number with mental age too young of Al's victims. Adamson had been missing for five weeks, but few people could have expected him to turn up in such bizarre circumstances, which wouldn't have seemed out of place in one of his own films.

Born Albert Victor Adamson in 1929, he was a second generation film maker. His father, Victor Adamson had made a number of independent films under pseudonyms like Denver Dixon and Art Mix. It was with his father that Al made his first film PSYCHO A GO-GO, in 1965 telling the story of a gang of jewel thieves controlling the mind of a Vietnam veteran. The film wasn't a success but did pave the way for Adamson's career making oddball pictures.

One of the reasons that people think Al Adamson was more prolific than was actually the case is the amount of retitling and revamping done on his films. For example, PSYCHO A GO-GO was retitled in 1969 as FIEND WITH THE ELECTRONIC BRAIN, with additional footage. In 1975 yet more new material was added (this time featuring Adamson regulars John Carradine, Kent Taylor, and Adamson's wife Regina Carroll), and the film emerged as BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR. On video in Britain during the early Eighties, this version of the film appeared as THE MAN WITH THE SYNTHETIC BRAIN, and there are also versions in existence known as THE LOVE MANIAC and THE FIEND WITH THE ATOMIC BRAIN. Confusion is a word that springs to mind!

Adamson followed this in 1967 with BLOOD OF DRACULA'S CASTLE, which he co-directed with Jean Hewitt. A muddled effort featuring bunchbacks, werewolves, chained women and occult sacrifices, this horror comedy fails to insure or shock. It did, however, mark the beginning of a long series of collaborations between Adamson and horror veteran John Carradine (who doesn't play Dracula in the film).

> "Who can resist lyrics such as, "by the time I was twelve, I was killing, killing for Satan? – Andrew Lloyd Webber cut your heart out!"

THE FREAK-OUT GIRLI

Adamson's career kicked off properly in 1969 with his first "hit", SATAN'S SADISTS. This biker film had a pretty shaky premise: psycho bikers hunting down a couple in the desert while raping and pillaging along the way. But was today, it seems pretty lacklustre, despite plenty of sex, violence and drug abuse. Nevertheless, it is pretty entertaining if you are in the right mood, and is helped enormously by featuring the all time greatest theme song ever, who can resist lyrics such as "by the time I was twelve, I was killing, killing for Satan"? – Andrew Lloyd Webber cut your heart out! It was good to see former family entertainment star Russ Tamblyn debunking himself as the leader of the bikers, and the movie also saw the first appearance of Regina Carroll (typed as "the Freak Out Girl"), who Adamson had "discovered" working in a coffee shop, and subsequently married.

Following the success of SATAN'S SADISTS at the drive-ins (the film was banned outright in Britain), Adamson began to share films out locally for producer Sam Sherman's independent International. Adamson had formed the company with Sherman, a former journalist for CHEAP THRILLS magazine, and the two of them would collaborate for a number of years.

1970 saw DRACULA VS FRANKENSTEIN (known on video as REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN), which was an unlikely and unwieldy collision of old style horror and modern exploitation. The film begun life as THE BLOOD SEEKERS, and Dracula and Frankenstein were added as the story late in the day. Adamson cast Lon Chaney Jr. and J. Carrol Naish, two veterans more making what would be their final appearances. Neither role was an implicitly and to a career. Naish, a feeble old man in his Seventies, acted from a wheelchair, playing the Frankenstein. Chaney was a psycho killer who chased mini-skirted girls. FAMOUS MONSTERS editor Forrest J. Ackerman was also in the cast to see the humiliation of his idols.

Adamson did seem to be trying to capture the atmosphere of the old Universal horrors at times, and used some of the laboratory props from THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN in the film. Yet this didn't sit comfortably with scenes showing Regina Carroll dropping acid, and Russ Tamblyn turning up as a biker right out of SATAN'S SADISTS. Amazingly, the film was a major success, playing drive-ins for years.

Also in 1970, Adamson "created" VAMPIRE MEN OF THE LOST PLANET. Another film with multiple titles (HORROR OF THE BLOOD MONSTERS, CREATURES OF THE PREHISTORIC PLANET, HORROR CREATURES OF THE PREHISTORIC PLANET, and SPACE MISSION OF THE LOST PLANET), the film was, in fact, another nefarious patch-up affair... so audacious, in fact, that you can't help but admire Adamson's cheek.

Originally a monochrome Filipino film featuring mutant cavemen, VAMPIRE MEN OF THE LOST PLANET features new footage shot by Adamson featuring John Carradine and Vicki Volante as astro-scientists who land on a mysterious planet to investigate the vampire aliens who are

terrifying Death. To explain away the black and white footage, Adamson tinted the film and came up with some mumbo jumbo about "Spectrum X", a form of radiation which blurs the colours of the spectrum! Astonishingly, he seemed to get away with this cop-out trick!

1970 was a busy year for Adamson. He also directed HELL'S BLOODY DEVILS (aka THE FAKERS and SMASHING THE CRIME SYNDICATE), which managed to combine bikers, Nazi war criminals and the Mafia! The cast included many of what had already become Adamson's stock company: Scott Brady, Kent Taylor, John Carradine and Vicki Volante. Also featured were Brodericks Crawford and Hamilton Allen (who also appeared in SATAN'S SADISTS).

To prove himself adept at all genres, Adamson also made a western the same year: FIVE BLOODY GRAVES (aka GUN RIDERS and LONELY MAN) was an offbeat tale about "The Messenger of Death" who narrates the story. Featuring plenty of violence, the film was another success.

WOMEN IN CHAINS

1971 saw Adamson take a leave of absence from Independent International, to shoot BRAIN OF BLOOD for Barjeophera. The film was another sequel to the strangely popular BLOOD ISLAND films that had been shot in the Philippines by Eddie Romero. Vicki Volante, Kent Taylor and Regina Carroll appeared in the cast, as did DRACULA VS FRANKENSTEIN cast members Angelo Rossito, Zandor Vorkov and John Bloom, struggling with a story that only loosely connected to Romero's films. Still, with brain transplants, women in chains and sufficient blood spilling, the film was a drive in winner.

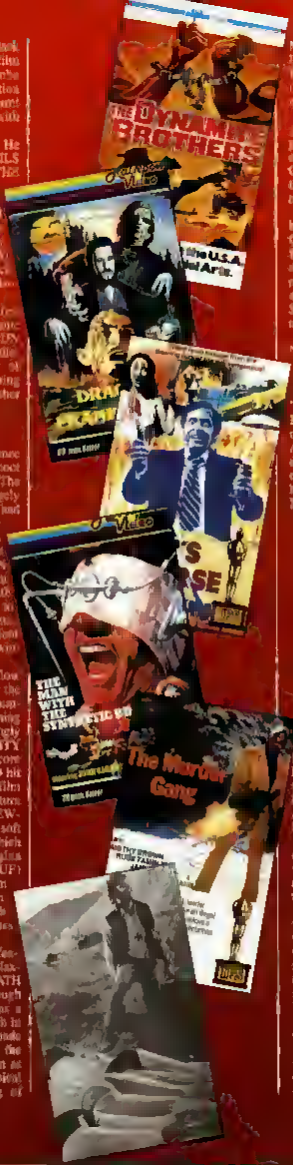
After this, Adamson began to slow down, and to diversify his career. Over the next few years, he would dabble in a number of genres, only occasionally returning to horror. His films became increasingly obscure as well. 1973 saw NAUGHTY STEWARDESSES, a belated soft core attempt to cash in on the success of 3D hit THE STEWARDESSES (1969); the film was popular enough for Adamson to return to the theme with BLAZING STEWARDESSES in 1975. He also shot a soft core action film, GIRLS FOR RENT, which starred hard core superstar Georgina Spelvin. GIRLS HOTEL (aka INTRIGUE) was another sexploitation film from around 1976, which mixed drugs, gambling and murder into the soft core grab bag action. The cast included Ross Tarbitys and Regina Carroll.

THE DYNAMITE BROTHERS featured Aldo Ray in a cheap but lively blaxploitation/kung fu crossover film. DEATH DIMENSION, on the other hand, although starring black superstar Jim Kelly was a mixed up spy movie, attempting to cash in on the Bond movies. George Lazenby made one of his rare screen appearances in the film as did Harold Sakata, best known as Odd Job from GOLDFINGER. A typical Adamson cost trick was the casting of Myron Lee as a character named Bruce Lee, the posters cleverly called him Myron BRUCE LEE, hoping to pull in easily swayed followers of the late great kung fu movie star.

Adamson continued to mix and match genres in search of the biggest audience possible. JESSI'S GIRLS was a sex western, starring Sondra Currie, while 1977's CINDERELLA 2000 mixed science fiction soft sex and music in a confused and not very successful tale.

Showing typical ingenuity, Adamson bought the rights to UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, a film shot in the sixties by Kroger Babb (no sleuth when it came to exploitation himself). Babb and spent $2 million on producing his film. Adamson shot 45 minutes of extra material for just $35,000, and retitled the film as an all new production.

Adamson's final horror film was NURSE SHERRI, made in 1978. Typically, the film has various alternative titles, BEYOND THE LIVING: HOSPITAL OF TERROR and TERROR HOSPITAL. On video in the UK, it was called KILLER'S CURSE. A mad and lurid tale of demonic possession, the film is Adamson at his crazed best, with hilarious dialogue and cheesy special effects. The cast didn't feature the usual Adamson stars, but instead top-liner Bill Jacobson and Marilyn Jet.



> **"Adamson had an instinctive knack for giving his audience what they wanted: sex, violence, bizarre plots and carefully sustained madness..."**

By the 1980's, Adamson had left the film business. A nasty illness that affected Regina Carroll partly influenced his decision, as did the decline of the drive in market. He moved into the restaurant business, although he did make plans to return to film-making in 1992.

Carroll (born Regina Collins, died of cancer in 1993 at the age of 49, and Al was working on a UFO-themed science fiction movie with his old buddy Sam Sherman at the time of his own death.

Adamson was the first to admit that his work was less than brilliant, but felt proud that all of his films had made money and that he could "put more on screen for less money than anybody." And no matter what else can be said about his work, it could never be called dull. Adamson had an instinctive knack for giving his audience what they wanted: sex, violence, bizarre plots and carefully sustained madness. His death at 66, in such unusual and mysterious circumstances, might well be a fitting end for a man who made so many truly weird films. ☡

ATTENTION! MONSTER MAG COLLECTORS...

...we've stumbled across a collection of vintage American horror magazines published in the 1960s and early 70s. These are NOT reprints, but the original publications, many of which received scant distribution in this country. Please note that quantities are very low and that titles will be sent out on a first come, first served basis. We have all of the magazines in stock and they will be mailed out immediately to purchasers. Prices include postage

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